

“TOTALLY TOBACCO-FREE PRISONS – OUTCOMES AND INSIGHTS”

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WHAT: **The Largest US State Prison System Allows No Tobacco on State Property**
(No Employee, Visitor or Inmate Is Exempted)

There was bipartisan support for AB384 (Republican author-a cancer victim, a Democratic legislative majority, and a Republican governor)

WHERE: **California** – The most diverse and populous U.S. state with 30 million people.

WHO: **California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation**

- 170,000 felons in 33 prisons
 - 70 % were smokers.
 - 40 % were under psychiatric care
 - 95% will eventually leave prison
- 40,000 employees and thousands of visitors and contractors
- The most over-crowded, most diverse and gang-ridden prison system in the U.S. (LA Times)

WHEN: **July 1, 2005.** (3 prisons had gone Tobacco-Free--for inmates only-- three years earlier).

WHY: **Despite law prohibiting indoor smoking in California since 1998, covert smoking continued, and both staff and inmates complained and filed lawsuits regarding secondhand smoke harms.**

Other Issues:

- Huge medical costs: Bypass surgery, Transplants, COPD, Asthma, Angioplasties, Pneumonias, Cataracts, Osteoporosis, Wound infections, Dental disasters, Strokes, etc, etc.
- Many malignancies
- ER and outside hospital costs (plus large staffing costs to guard inmates outside the prison)
- Fires
- Increased facilities maintenance costs due to smoke, litter, burn damage
- Worsening of HIV immunodeficiency and hepatitis C liver fibrosis
- Worsening of aggression, akathisia & tardive dyskinesia
- Increased Workers’ Compensation costs and disability payments
- Increased absenteeism & decreased productivity in smoking employees.

- HOW:** Education and “Cold Turkey” in a Supportive Milieu. (NRT is CONTRAINDICATED in this setting.)
- RESULTS:** **Virtually No Problems in a 58-County Conference Call Evaluation.**
- No adverse press coverage after implementation.
 - Appreciative inmates and staff. (“**Doc, I didn’t sleep as well for about 3 nights, but then if I couldn’t see tobacco, smell it, or touch it, I could forget about it,**” was the usual report, along with “Thank you!”)
 - Decreased costs (Medical, Insurance, Disability, Worker’s Comp, Maintenance, and Litigation).
 - Better health for all involved and their families – (An exclusive-contractor cardiology group reports a **40% reduction** in total encounters since 2002)
 - Better attitudes: “**Doc, if I can quit tobacco, maybe I can do some other things right in my life, too.**”
- LESSONS:** **Cravings are Easily Defeated in a Totally Tobacco-Free Milieu.** Policymakers have a duty of care to protect those in custody from secondhand smoke and tobacco. Improved health, less inmate aggression & lowered costs result.
- NEXT:** **Legislation To Make All of the California State Mental Hospitals Similarly Tobacco-Free is Currently Active.** 45% of all tobacco is consumed by those with mental illness, and tobacco-related disease is the leading cause of death in the mentally ill.
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