

July 15, 2010

The Honorable Councilwoman At-large Carol Boigon  
Denver City Council  
City and County of Denver  
1437 Bannock Street, Room 451  
Denver, CO 80202

**RE: Smoking Ban Around City Hospitals**

Dear Councilwoman Boigon:

We and our patients have been very pleased with the support we have received from the City and County of Denver of a tobacco free campus at National Jewish Health. We would like to see the ordinance that you sponsored, Denver Revised Municipal Code §38-8, effective Nov. 20, 2008, to ban smoking on the public right-of-way, including sidewalks, tree lawns, and alleys adjoining hospitals and other hospital-owned properties or properties leased by any hospital in the City and County of Denver be extended. We think it sends the right message that smoking is not welcome around a hospital and its patients.

In order to help you prepare to continue the ban before its sunset date this fall, we are responding to the following questions about National Jewish Health's experience with the smoking ban:

1. Was the ban effective in eliminating smoking on the public right-of-way adjoining your hospital and all its relevant buildings, especially near patient entrances and exits?

Yes, the new ordinance along with our tobacco free campus policy has eliminated all smoking on and around our property.

2. Have you had any concerns – negative or positive – about impacts of the ban?

We have heard from a number of Faculty members that it's good to see National Jewish and the city of Denver take the lead on this important health issue. Also, we have heard that this has helped some of our inpatients quit smoking. Dr. Fred Wamboldt stated, "I have not heard any complaints from my patients, and a number of my patients have been moved to quit smoking based on this policy".

3. Has your facility received any comments from patients and/or visitors on the smoking ban? Please be specific. How have you have responded?

We have had very few issues involving the city law. We tell people who smoke on property that the smoking policy is enforced from curb to curb. We have had a few people get a little upset over the smoking ban but when we remind them they at a respiratory facility they then cooperate.

4. Has your facility received any comments from neighbors about patients, visitors or staff leaving hospital property to smoke and to intrude on the neighborhood with noise, garbage, loitering, and so on? Please be specific.

In the beginning we received some complaints from several of our neighbors; we addressed each complaint and corrected the behavior. In addition, we placed cigarette receptacles in key places to discourage staff or visitors from discarding their cigarette butts on the ground. Our environmental services workers have been cleaning up the areas that are being used off campus by smokers.

5. How did you implement your good neighbor policy? What worked and what would you change? Please send me a copy of the policy.

We sent a letter to each of our neighbors explaining why we were implementing the Tobacco Free Policy and contact information on who to call if they had any questions or concerns. Then when we received a few complaints we acted immediately to rectify the situation. Attached is a copy of our policy.

6. Based on your experiences over the past 18 months, do you have suggestions to improve the ban on smoking around City hospitals?

Not at this time. It appears to be working well for National Jewish and its patients.

7. Has the ban helped you to better serve your patients? Has it affected your professional ratings on hospital quality?

As the leading pulmonary hospital in the country, we do not want our patients, many who are on oxygen, exposed to cigarette smoke while on our property and under our care.

8. Is there anything else you think I should know about the smoking ban around City hospitals?

No

Thank you for your support of this important health issue.

Sincerely,



Michael Salem, M.D.



Susan Roll  
Chief Human Resources Officer