

July 28, 2010

Carol Boigon  
Councilwoman At-large  
1437 Bannock Street, Room 451  
Denver, CO 80202

RE: Smoking Ban Around City Hospitals

Dear Councilwoman At-large Boigon:

Thank you for asking St. Anthony Central to provide feedback to you regarding the “Smoking Ban Around City Hospitals”.

St. Anthony Central has had a wide variety of experiences over the last eighteen months since the inception of the Smoking Ban. Please find below our views to your questions posed in your letter.

*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?*

The smoking ban has slightly reduced the smoking on the public right-of-way adjoining St. Anthony Central Hospital. One change that supported the smoking ban making it successful at St. Anthony Central is the chose by the Denver hospitals to go smoke-free two years ago.

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

Because individuals who were trespassing in the neighborhood were not on St. Anthony Central property and therefore, outside it's jurisdiction, St. Anthony Central could only offer suggestions to the private homeowner on how to address the trespassing offenders. What came to light was, although there was an ordinance stating that there would be a \$300 fine for infractions, that neither St. Anthony Central nor our neighborhood saw any enforcement. It appeared that the neighborhood and St. Anthony Central could threaten individuals but could not actually take action. There may have been individuals who were cited for breaking this ordinance; but at this time St. Anthony Central and the neighborhood are unaware of any enforcement. St. Anthony Central did reply to concerned neighbors by letters, phone calls and personal visits.

(more)

(2)

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

St. Anthony Central has received a number of comments from patients with lung disease. They have noticed the benefit of not being exposed to cigarette smoke while visiting family members in the hospital or while going to their doctor appointments.

While many people responded positively to the smoking ban; there were a small minority of patients who outright defied the suggestion from staff members to please refrain from smoking on the right-of-way. It appeared that there was little that could be done to resolve this issue.

*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.*

There have been some valid complaints from some of the members of the neighborhoods surrounding St. Anthony Central. Every complaint received was followed up personally by a representative of St. Anthony Central. After consultation with the affected neighbor action steps were identified and put into place. We have made it our focus at St. Anthony Central to go "above and beyond" and focus on being a "Good Neighbor". Our staff members have gone into the neighborhoods to pick up garbage, installed signs upon request security staff have taken on extra rounds to patrol the hospital campus, and also installed a fence for a neighbor. There were a few complaints, upon investigation, that were not actually hospital staff, patients, or visitors. However, St. Anthony Central chose to take responsibility for these issues and made the necessary corrections.

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

St. Anthony Central does not have a formal "Good Neighbor" policy prior to the ordinance. As issues came to the attention of our organization a process was naturally developed. We found by notifying appropriate staff members who personally contacted the concerned neighbor issues were easier to resolve. Prior to the implementation of the ordinance, St. Anthony Central met with the neighborhood groups surrounding our facility and outlined the proposed focus and answered questions. Contact information with names and phone numbers were provided to our neighbors.

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

As mentioned previously, it may have been helpful if there had actually been enforcement of the ordinance.

(more)

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

St. Anthony Central has received sporadic positive comments from our patients specifically our patients with lung disease.

St. Anthony Central successfully passed our accreditation by the Joint Commission with the highest score it has ever been received as we not only met, but exceeded the standards regarding having no smoking on the grounds of the hospital.

8) *Is there anything else you think I should know about the smoking ban around city hospitals?*

The proximity of Sloans Lake Park was of great benefit to the enforcement of the smoking ban and kept the immediate neighborhood from being impacted. Individuals who desired to smoke were directed to the park and many readily complied.

Thank you Councilwoman At-large, Boigon, for your continued service to our community

Sincerely,



Peter Makowski  
CEO, St. Anthony Central