

## GRAND ROUNDS

Patients can take a long breath of fresh, clear valley air after an announcement of a new smoking policy now in effect on hospital property.

Last week RVH recognized National Non-Smoking Week with a week-long schedule of activities for staff, leading up to the implementation of designated smoking areas on January 20.

“This is not just for staff, but a hospital-wide policy,” says RVH Vice-President of Corporate Services, Julia Boudreau. The policy applies to all patients, visitors, volunteers, physicians and staff alike. “Our hospital has gone smoke-free except in designated areas, so we ask that anyone at the hospital or on hospital grounds adhere to the policy.”

Lighting up in any area near the front of the building is prohibited to ensure the comfort and safety of our patients. Anyone not abiding by the new rules will be advised to butt out or re-locate to the designated area.

This policy, like others implemented at RVH over the years, will only be truly effective if everyone does their part to comply. We prefer not to spend valuable time and resources on enforcement. Rather, we ask

for understanding that a process was put in place whereby stakeholders could provide input and a consensus was reached on how to move forward.

Signs will be posted throughout the hospital and on the RVH campus directing patients, visitors and volunteers to the appropriate spot just a short distance from the emergency department doors.

Staff at the hospital, at the clinics and at the Ambulance Communication Centre, and physicians who smoke may use the same area, or can walk to the other side of the parking lot behind the grey building to the staff-only smoking area. Since the doctors’ offices at the clinics are on hospital property, patients who wish to smoke must walk over to the designated smoking area behind the emergency entrance.

These smoking areas were determined by a committee comprised of smokers and non-smokers after staff input and careful consideration of many factors to protect our patients.

Working as a team to discuss the needs and concerns of those who smoke is a “much more professional approach” than saying there is no smoking on hospital property at all, notes Colleen Enright, one RVH staff member of the committee.

Maureen Magill, RVH Respiratory Therapist and member of the RVH Wellness Committee, chaired the committee for the new smoking policy which respects the rights of individuals who smoke and understands the importance of providing a smoke-free environment for all our patients, staff and visitors.

This past National Non-Smoking Week’s theme was “Breaking up is hard to do” and RVH focused on the options available to those who wish to quit smoking and promoted overall healthy living.

Magill says patients who smoke are offered resources and nicotine replacement therapy immediately after they are admitted to the hospital, and staff members are supported in their effort to kick the habit through the employee cessation program.

“The behaviour is one thing, and the addiction is another,” Magill recognizes, adding that the final decisions on where to locate each of the smoking areas was a very positive compromise, done in a very respectful manner.

“As a health care facility committed to providing the safest and healthiest environment possible for patients, staff, physicians and visitors, our ultimate goal is to become smoke-free,” says RVH President and CEO Randy Penney. “I am pleased that the committee representing all sides of the issue was able to achieve this important first step.”

