

News for Immediate Release

AS STATE BAN GOES INTO EFFECT, NORTHEAST OHIO COMPANIES ALSO SNUFF OUT SMOKING ON GROUNDS

Smoking cessation programs soaring in popularity

KENT, Ohio (Dec. 14, 2006) – The glow of lit cigarettes is dimming all throughout the state this month, but bars and restaurants aren't the only places where the air will be cleaner in Northeast Ohio. Three Northeast Ohio companies, Parker Hannifin, Robinson Memorial Hospital and Allen Aircraft, also are following suit by implementing smoke-free policies at their facilities.

Coleman Wellness Solutions, a not-for-profit full-service provider of wellness and safety programs, has been working with all three companies to implement individualized smoke-free plans for their facilities and provide smoking cessation programs to the employees of the companies.

“The impact that a smoking cessation program has on a company’s overall well-being is incredible,” said Susan Wilcox, director of Coleman Wellness Solutions. “The U.S. Centers for Disease Control estimates that businesses lose \$1,760 per year in lost productivity and \$1,623 per year in excess medical expenditures for each smoker that they employ.”

Parker Hannifin, a leading diversified manufacturer of motion and control technologies and systems, went completely smoke-free at its Kent facility on Nov. 1. Coleman Wellness Solutions helped the administration prepare tactics to assist with the policy change and provided a 5-week on-site cessation program that also included Nicotine Replacement Therapy for Parker Hannifin employees.

On Nov. 17, just 10 days after the passage of the statewide smoking ban, Robinson Memorial Hospital in Ravenna implemented its own smoke-free plan on its entire campus. The hospital used Coleman’s assistance in the administrative implementation as well as a smoking cessation program for its employees.

Allen Aircraft of Ravenna, an industry leader in the production of aircraft fluid system components and metal finishing processing, will join the ranks of the smoke-free companies on Jan. 1, 2007. Smoking cessation programs have currently begun at their facilities for Allen Aircraft employees.

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Once a company implements a smoking cessation program with Coleman Wellness Solutions, its employees will receive follow-up support and coaching in their cessation efforts for an entire year. Employees also receive information on the Ohio Quit Line so they are able to take advantage of the telephonic and Nicotine Replacement Therapy services.

Coleman Wellness Solutions, a member of the Portage County Tobacco Coalition, has been awarded grant money from the Ohio Tobacco Settlement since 2001 to provide policy assistance and smoking cessation programming for companies in Portage County at no cost. To date, the organization has used the grant money to provide free assistance to 32 companies and over 400 employees in Portage County. Coleman was recently awarded the grant again in 2007, which will allow it to offer services at no cost to another eight companies in Portage County in the upcoming year.

With certifications from both the Mayo Clinic and American Lung Association to provide smoking cessation programs, Coleman Wellness Solutions has seen the number of companies moving toward a smoke-free policy grow dramatically over the last few years. Currently, Ametek, City of Kent, Portage Metropolitan Housing Authority and General Electric are on the waiting list for January. The organization also offers Drug Free Workplace programs, employee assistance programs, wellness programming, emotional intelligence training, customized training and other health and safety programs to companies regionally.

“Lost productivity is a key point of interest for many larger companies,” Wilcox said. “Once they hear that the average smoking employee spends a total of 18 days a year on smoking breaks, or that on average, smokers miss 60 percent more days of work per year than nonsmokers – they know the programs are certainly worth the while.”

“Other HR directors and employers know that their healthcare costs will be helped dramatically by a smoke-free policy over just a designated smoking area standard,” said Andra Polasky, corporate services coordinator for Coleman Wellness Solutions.

“Phillip Morris, the cigarette manufacturer, found that employees in smoke-free workplace consume 11 to 15 percent less tobacco on average, and they also have an impressive quit rate that is 84 percent higher than average. The less smoking a person does, the less their healthcare usually ends up costing,” said Polasky.

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Coleman Wellness Solutions is an enterprise of Coleman Professional Services, a nationally recognized not-for-profit provider of behavioral health and rehabilitation programs that improve the lives of individuals, families and businesses in Northeast Ohio. The company relies on an enterprise business model to diversify its funding. Coleman's foundation and four enterprise companies produce more than 40 percent of the company's funding for its award-winning programs.

For more information on Coleman Wellness Solutions or the services it offers, visit www.coleman-wellness.com or call 330-673-3309.

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