

# S<sup>2</sup>AY Rural Health Network, Inc.

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## Smoking Ban Passes

After a close vote at the Seneca County Board of Supervisors meeting on September 27th, the proposal to ban smoking on all county owned or leased properties passed. Seneca County Public Health Director Vicki Swinehart, had worked tirelessly behind the scene for weeks advocating for passage of the local law. There will be no more smoking anywhere on county-owned or county-leased property, indoors or outdoors when the law goes into effect on October 17, 2011.

Dr. Timothy Ryan, medical director of the county Health Department and a member of the county Board of Health, had also advocated for the smoking ban. At a public hearing on the ban he said Seneca County's adult smoking rate is 29 percent, much higher than the state's average of 15 to 19 percent. Dr. Jonathon Todd Egan, DC, MPH Assistant Professor, New York Chiropractic College, also spoke at the public hearing saying smokers die an average of 14 years before non-smokers. He said smoking is the chief cause of preventable death, and a ban would send the message that smoking is not normal or acceptable. He cited the health impacts on non-smokers from second-hand smoke, saying public health outweighs freedom of choice.

The New York State Department of Health Quitline reports the tobacco related monetary costs in New York as:

- ▶ Annual smoking-related health care costs and lost productivity in NY total \$14.2 billion
- ▶ Annual health care expenditures in the State directly caused by tobacco use: \$8.17 billion
- ▶ Annual State Medicaid program's total health expenditures caused by tobacco use: \$5.47 billion
- ▶ Annual health care expenditures in New York from secondhand smoke exposure: \$317 million
- ▶ Residents' state/federal taxes to cover smoking-caused gov't costs: \$5.9 billion (\$903/household)
- ▶ Smoking-caused productivity losses in New York: \$6.05 billion
- ▶ Smoking-caused health costs and productivity losses per pack sold in New York: \$21.91

Seneca County is a member of the S<sup>2</sup>AY Rural Health Network. The Network is an affiliation of six Public Health Departments in Seneca, Schuyler, Steuben, Yates, Ontario and Wayne Counties, dedicated to improving health outcomes in the region.

For further information, contact Andrea Haradon, Network Consultant at 607.962.8459.