

All SBHCS Facilities are Smoke/Tobacco-Free on November 19

Hospitals Celebrate Great American Smokeout with Success Stories from Across the State

Bill Delaney, Crystal Branch and Tina McGuire are all quitters—and reaping the benefits after years, sometimes decades of trying, failing, and trying again to kick their smoking habits. They attribute their success to the support of the Saint Barnabas Health Care System where statewide campuses will all be smoke/tobacco-free on Thursday, November 19, to coincide with the 34th anniversary of the American Cancer Society’s Great American Smokeout.



Bill Delaney



Crystal Branch



Tina McGuire

- Bill Delaney, 56, of Hazlet, Vice President of Finance for the Saint Barnabas Hospice and Palliative Care Center for ten years, had smoked for 40 years and had continuously tried to quit for 20 years. He actually came to the Saint Barnabas Institute for Prevention’s meetings to represent the smokers on the committee to prepare for November 19. On July 7, 2009, he finally relinquished his 1 ½ pack-a-day habit.
- Crystal Branch, 43, of Montclair, is Nurse Manager of Orthopedics at Clara Maass Medical Center in Belleville, where she has worked for over 10 years. A smoker for 22 years before her quit date of August 7, 2009, she said she “went dragging and screaming into quitting. If I can do it, anyone can.”
- Tina McGuire, 43, of Beachwood, is an Inpatient Coder at Community Medical Center in Toms River, where she has worked for over 20 years. Tina has actually been a success story since June 11, 2008 and was prepared when the southern campuses of the Saint Barnabas Health Care System became smoke/tobacco-free in November 2008. She had been a smoker for 24 years and had tried many times to quit.

All three credit the Saint Barnabas Behavioral Health’s Institute for Prevention Quit Center for their success and that of numerous colleagues.

The Saint Barnabas campuses are part of the New Jersey Tobacco-Free Hospital Campus Collaborative, a coalition of more than 35 hospitals and health systems across the state. These systems, through a partnership with the American Cancer Society, are committed to working together to create a healthier environment for their patients, employees and visitors by eliminating the use of all tobacco products throughout their entire campus.

“Going smoke-free on all campuses not only promotes a healthy environment but is essential to foster the sense of healing that exists at hospitals and health care facilities,” says Connie Greene, vice president of the Institute for Prevention. “Ensuring cleaner air is an important step in creating a better environment for our patients, visitors, physicians and employees. We acknowledge that going smoke-free on our campuses will be an adjustment for everyone, but in the end, it’s just the right thing to do.”

The Tobacco Dependence Treatment Program is funded by a grant from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services Division of Family Health Services. The program consists of a one-on-one tobacco assessment, individualized treatment plans, and an eight-week evidence-based quit program. Participants have access to Nicotine Replacement Therapy (nicotine patches, gum, lozenges) at a discounted rate.

Leading up to November 19th, SBHCS has been providing education and information to families and patients during pre-registration and upon registration clearly stating the “No Smoking on Campus” policy. Patients are able to request Nicotine Replacement Therapy to assist with their comfort while they are hospitalized.

Helene Long, Tobacco Treatment Specialist at the Institute for Prevention, said “People who join a program that offers support as well as pharmacological assistance have a success rate double that of people who try to do it without help.”

Clearly, Bill, Crystal and Tina agree. They all applaud Dennis Lee, Tobacco Treatment Specialist, Helene Long, the Institute for Prevention program, and the support of their colleagues, family and friends for their success. “I bought hundreds of dollars of patches but I never had the support,” said Bill. Crystal agrees. “The program was a godsend. It is so lucky the System gave us this opportunity at work, in a safe environment, among people who understand.”

All three feel healthier and are committed to concentrating on diet and exercise. And all say their family members and friends appreciate the lack of smoke that permeated cars, houses, and clothes.

With the newfound saved money, Bill says it will go right into the operating budget of his family that includes five children. Crystal says with her new extra money she will buy a new wardrobe because she recently lost significant weight and she will go on a trip. And Tina has saved the year’s worth of money previously spent on cigarettes in a coffee can and says she goes shopping a lot more, and plans to visit her daughter who is in college in California.

As exciting side effects, Tina says, “One of the biggest gains is now when I eat I can taste the food.”