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UNDERSTAND PREVENT & CURE CANCER

Roswell Park Cancer Institute
Memo in Support

Resolution Establishing a Smoke-Free Policy for Erie County-owned Parks, Playgrounds, Beaches, Golf Courses and Recreational Areas
(Mazur)

Roswell Park Cancer Institute strongly supports the proposed resolution establishing a smoke free policy for Erie County owned playgrounds, beaches, golf courses and recreational areas.

The purpose of park and recreation areas is to promote healthy activities, and tobacco-free policies fit with this idea. Recreation for children should not mean having to play among cigarette butts or being exposed to secondhand smoke.

Secondhand smoke is a human carcinogen for which there is no safe level of exposure, not even outdoors. Every year 3,400 people die of lung cancer as a direct result of secondhand smoke nationwide. Cigarette butts are also the most littered item in the world and discarded cigarettes pollute land and water ways, diminish the beauty of our public spaces and are poisonous to wildlife and children who may ingest them.

Tobacco-free policies establish the community norm that tobacco use is not an acceptable behavior for young people or adults. Because children model adult behavior, reducing the frequency with which children and teens see adults smoking will have an impact on the risk of young people starting to smoke.

As a result of clean air laws and tobacco policies, most tobacco users have become accustomed to and comply with these restrictions, and signs posted at public spaces empower everyone to support these policies through friendly reminders. Over 200 municipalities in New York State, the State Parks System, and New York City have already passed regulations restricting tobacco use in outdoor recreational areas, and hundreds of municipalities throughout the country are doing the same. Successful non-smoking policies have been implemented at Ralph Wilson Stadium, First Niagara Center, Coca- Cola field and the Walden Galleria Mall.

This resolution provides a good opportunity for Erie County to encourage healthier, smoke free communities.