


**TO: All Employees Participating in the County Insurance Program**

**FROM: Charles R. Oliver, County Administrator** 

**DATE: April 1, 2016**

**SUBJECT: Tobacco Free Incentive Program**

The County is dedicated to providing a healthy, comfortable, and productive work environment for its employees. State law prohibits smoking in public buildings and facilities and has allowed areas to be designated for smoking at the discretion of the County Administrator.

All owned or leased County buildings, facilities, and vehicles are designated as non-smoking. Smoking areas have been designated outside County buildings and facilities. This policy applies to all employees, clients, contractors and vendors.

Effective October 1, 2016, the County will implement a tobacco free incentive program, as part of the Citrus County Wellness Program to help reduce insurance costs. Employees who are tobacco free or who participate in the tobacco free incentive program will be eligible to receive an incentive in the form of a \$50.00 per month reduction in health insurance premiums.

Employees who choose not to participate in the tobacco free incentive program will be required to pay \$50.00 per month toward their insurance premium. This includes employees who have employee only coverage.

During Annual Open Enrollment, employees will be required to submit to a nicotine test and sign a non-tobacco use certification to continue to receive the tobacco free incentive.

Tobacco is defined as any lighted or unlighted cigarette, nicotine dispensing device, cigar, pipe or any other types of smoking product, including smokeless tobacco such as spit tobacco, dip, chew, or snuff in any form.

Employees who use tobacco and would like to quit may participate in tobacco cessation programs administered through the Employee Health Clinic or their personal physician. Employees may also find smoking cessation resources through the local Health Department.

Employees who complete a tobacco cessation program will be required to provide a copy of the certificate of completion to the Employee Health Clinic, and sign the non-tobacco use certification to receive the tobacco free incentive.

Employees who provide false information regarding their tobacco use in order to receive the incentive may be subject to disciplinary action that applies to other infractions of County policy.

## Tobacco Free Incentive Program

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease, disability and death in the United States. There is a direct link between tobacco use and a number of health risk factors, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease and reproductive health.

The Federal government recognizes the impact tobacco use has on medical expenses and health insurance costs and allows insurance companies to adjust premiums for tobacco use up to 30%.

It is our desire to encourage all employees to establish and maintain a healthy lifestyle which includes non-tobacco use. Effective April 1, 2016, we are beginning our "tobacco free" wellness initiative, in conjunction with the Citrus County Wellness Program and our group health insurance plan.

Effective October 1, 2016, all employees will be required to pay at least \$50.00 each month toward their health insurance premium. Employees will be eligible to receive an incentive in the form of a \$50.00 per month reduction in health insurance premiums by becoming or remaining tobacco free.

Any employee who is a participant in the County sponsored health insurance program must sign a certification annually indicating that they are tobacco free and submit to a tobacco screening test

The certification must be submitted to the Employee Health Clinic during annual open enrollment each year indicating that the employee is tobacco free for tobacco use beginning in 2016.

Once the certification is received by the Employee Health Clinic together with a negative tobacco screen, the employee will receive a \$50.00 per month reduction in their health insurance premium effective October 1, 2016.

Annual testing of employees will begin during open enrollment in 2016 for those employees signing a certification and authorization to test for nicotine. Testing will be conducted at the Employee Health Clinic. The result of the testing will be used to determine if an employee is qualified to receive the \$50.00 per month incentive. All related testing information will be maintained by the Employee Health Clinic. It will be treated in the same manner as all other health related information maintained and safeguarded at the Employee Health Clinic. All applicable rules, regulations and/or laws will be followed in maintaining the confidentiality of all records maintained by the Employee Health Clinic.

All current employees will have a period of time in which they can enroll in a tobacco cessation program to assist them, if they choose to quit using tobacco products.

Any employee who is not tobacco free by October 1, 2016 will still have the opportunity to either go through a tobacco cessation program, or quit on their own but pay the premium until they are tobacco free. If the employee participates in a tobacco cessation program, for that plan year, once the Employee Health Clinic receives their certificate of completion, they will not be charged the premium for the remainder of that plan year.

All new employees at time of hire will be required to sign the tobacco free certification and will be subject to the premium payment if they are tobacco users.

Tobacco is defined as any lighted or unlighted cigarette, nicotine dispensing device, cigar, pipe or any other types of smoking product, including smokeless tobacco such as spit tobacco, dip, chew, or snuff, in any form.

Anyone currently covered by our group health plan that is a current tobacco user and wishes to seek help or participate in a tobacco cessation program may contact the Employee Health Clinic to participate in a tobacco cessation program, or they may seek assistance through their personal physician. For anyone else, you may reach out to the local Health Department for guidance.

Employees who provide false information regarding their tobacco use in order to receive the incentive may be subject to disciplinary action that applies to other infractions of County policy.