

**Promoting a Safer and Healthier Community Since 1854**

Sandra Martell, RN, DNP  
Public Health Administrator

**Ian Linnabary**

President of Rockford Park District Board of Commissioners  
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Mr. Linnabary,

As the Tobacco Compliance Coordinator at Winnebago County Health Department, I would like to express our gratitude for your efforts in bringing the issue of the dangers of second hand smoke to the forefront and support your efforts as the Rockford Park District seeks to implement a "Smoke Free Park Policy". The Winnebago County Health Department is designated by the Illinois Department of Public Health as the local authority and enforcement agency for the Smoke Free Illinois Act. Moving to a complete smoke free policy for your park district facilities will benefit all members in our community and as a large community service organization, provide the leadership to a lifelong commitment to healthy communities.

As you know, exposure to second hand smoke has an immense amount of health risks, including infections and diseases. Recent statistics from our Winnebago County Health Department IPLAN 2016, 17% of the adult population are smokers, which is consistent with the state level. Youth on the other hand reported an average 19-20% having used a "any" form of a tobacco product in the last 30 days according to the 2016 Illinois Youth Survey(IYS), an increase from the 2014 Illinois Youth Survey.

With a Tobacco Free Communities grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health, Winnebago County Health Department is working on initiatives that advocate for "smoke free" environmental policies, such as "smoke free parks" within communities. Such policies can also prohibit the use of all tobacco products, including electronic cigarettes, due to the growing increase of use and the popular trend we are seeing throughout communities with in the State of Illinois. The benefits of "smoke free parks" include the prevention of cigarette related fires, litter, and sanitation and maintenance of grounds, changing perceptions of social norms regarding smoking, and could encourage smokers to quit.

The Winnebago County Health Department is initiating a "Wellness Focused Winnebago County" through a "Collective Impact" approach. This approach encourages our organizations to focus on a common agenda, share measurement opportunities, mutually reinforce activities, ongoing communication, and becoming a strong backbone to drive Winnebago County forward into healthier places to live, work, and play. With the support of your park district board in establishing a policy for a smoke free parks, we will impact not only the residents within the City of Rockford, but also the surrounding communities. If you would like any assistance with development and implementation ideas for your smoke free park facilities please feel contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Respectively,

**Alisen O'Hearn**

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