

The Virgin Islands Consortium

DOH Launches Smoke-Free Campaign

Health / **Published On July 28, 2017 01:59 PM /**

Staff **July 28, 2017**



The USVI Department of Health (D.O.H.) officially launched its "Be Smoke-Free Tobacco Campaign," with the posting of billboards in select areas on St. Croix (Hannah's Rest, Villa Lorraine and Sunny Isle Shopping Center), D.O.H. announced today. The campaign serves to alert residents and visitors of the dangers of smoking in association with one's health and the dangers of secondhand smoke -- especially its impact on children's health, says D.O.H.

The Smoke-Free campaign incorporates video PSAs that will be aired on television and during the previews at the movie theaters (in both districts), radio PSAs, billboards placed throughout the territory, and promotions on social media. The goals of the campaign are to discourage tobacco use among the territory's youth and young adults, promote quitting

among smokers, eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke, increase awareness of the dangers of tobacco use, and to bring awareness to the smoke-free law.

Effective February 2011, the Virgin Islands Smoke-Free Act prohibited smoking in virtually all areas open to the public and protects individuals from involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke. Smoking is prohibited in the following: any enclosed/ exposed public areas (health care facilities, restaurants, bars, hotels and resorts, beaches, parks, educational facilities, etc.) any outdoors services (i.e. restaurants on the boardwalk/water front in St. Croix and/or businesses/restaurants on Main Street/Red Hook, St. Thomas) or waiting line (i.e. food vans). Smokers must be at least twenty feet away from any opening of an establishment (windows, doors, ventilation systems). If you witness violations of the Smoke-free law, please make a report by calling the Tobacco Complaint Line, 340-712-6230.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of various preventable chronic disease, disability, and death in the U.S. Smoking can lead to heart disease, lung diseases, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes, and stroke. Tobacco products and tobacco smoke contain many harmful chemicals such as acetone, ammonia, arsenic, benzene, cadmium, formaldehyde, lead, mercury, and nicotine. There are many different forms of tobacco use. However, the most common in the territory are cigarettes, cigars, hookahs, and fanta/funta. It is important to note that fanta/funta leaves are tobacco leaves and the mixing of tobacco or tobacco leaves with any other product such as cannabis is likely to produce similar harmful effects on the body.

The “Be Smoke-Free Tobacco Campaign” will also promote smoking cessation among smokers via assistance from health care providers and the national quit line (1-800-QUIT-NOW). If you are a tobacco user and want to quit, speak to your health care provider and call the national quit line (1-800-784-8669).

The DOH’s Smoke-Free campaign’s timeframe: