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## **FOUR DC HOSPITALS TO PROHIBIT TOBACCO USE ON CAMPUS BEGINNING NOVEMBER 20**

*Washington, D.C., November 19, 2008* – Four District hospitals will institute 100% tobacco free campus policies this Thursday, November 20, in honor of the American Cancer Society's Great American Smoke Out (GASO). The use of tobacco has been prohibited for several years inside Georgetown University Hospital, Washington Hospital Center and the Specialty Hospitals of Washington at Hadley and Capitol Hill. The tobacco-free policies will now prohibit any use of tobacco products outside on all campus grounds, including the parking areas. This includes smoking in vehicles parked in the hospital parking lots.

These healthcare facilities will join more than 1200 hospitals nationwide, including Saint Elizabeths, Providence, and Sibley Hospitals in D.C., that have implemented strict all-campus no-tobacco use policies. Hospitals implementing this policy feel strongly that as healthcare institutions they must set the standard for health behaviors that improve the quality of life. Tobacco use remains the leading cause of death and disease killing 720 District residents and more than 440,000 Americans every year. It is responsible for more than \$221 million in DC healthcare costs to treat tobacco-related disease, and more than \$96 billion dollars nationwide.

"Taking steps towards making their campuses tobacco-free shows a true commitment on the part of these hospitals to making their healthcare facilities a place where the public can go without compromising their health," said Dr. Pierre Vigilance, Director of the District of Columbia Department of Health. "Facilities that initiate tobacco-free policies are leading the way by promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing diseases."

Each hospital will continue to offer free cessation counseling and nicotine patches and lozenges to its patients and employees who want to quit after the policy has been implemented. In observance of GASO, the hospitals, with the help of DCTFF, will host health fairs and offer screenings to assess smokers' carbon monoxide levels, which increase due to tobacco use. Smokers will be encouraged to call DC's Quitline for free assistance.

"The Lung Association commends these healthcare institutions for taking the initiative to ensure the safety and well-being of its staff, visitors and patients," says Rolando Andrew, CEO of the Lung Association. "We have been proud to work with each of these hospitals to prepare the community and staff by offering smoking cessation programs and resources."

The DC Tobacco Free Families Campaign, a partnership of the DC Department of Health, American Lung Association of DC, and the American Cancer Society, provides services to help DC hospitals go tobacco free by providing tobacco cessation training to hospital staff, including healthcare providers, nicotine patches and lozenges, free group support programs, and resources that promote DC's free Quitline, 800-QUIT NOW.

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