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**CONTACT: Sharon Fischer**  
**Tobacco Free Broome & Tioga Coordinator**  
**Broome County Health Department 607.778.3068**  
[sfischer@co.broome.ny.us](mailto:sfischer@co.broome.ny.us)

## **Residents of Multiunit Housing Nationally and Locally Exposed to Secondhand Smoke**

An estimated 27 to 29 million Americans living in multiunit housing are exposed to secondhand tobacco smoke in their homes, even though they don't allow smoking in their homes, according to a new study released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The study, released in the journal *Nicotine & Tobacco Research* on Friday, December 14th, is the first to report national and state estimates of the number of multiunit housing residents who are exposed to secondhand smoke that entered their homes from somewhere else in or around their buildings.

The study finds that approximately 52% of New York State residents live in multiunit housing. Although 76% of residents living in multiunit housing have a smoke free policy in their own home, 34% report exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke that originated from somewhere else inside or around their buildings.

Separating smokers from non-smokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot eliminate exposure of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke. Each year, secondhand smoke is responsible for an estimated 50,000 deaths in the United States.

The *Community Tobacco Survey of Adult Residents of Broome County* conducted in December 2011 by Joel LaLone Consulting found that although 71% of residents living in multiunit housing within the county favored a policy prohibiting smoking everywhere inside the building, only 32% lived in a building that had a smoke free policy.

Sharon Fischer, Coordinator of Tobacco Free Broome and Tioga said, "We know that the majority of residents living in multiunit dwellings prefer a smoke-free policy and local property managers and landlords have begun to respond. We are available to assist both residents and landlords establish a smoke free policy in their buildings."

Smoke-free MUH policies are legally permissible in both government-subsidized and market-rate housing and can result in cost savings for MUH operators. Moreover, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has encouraged Public Housing Authorities, as well as owners and management agents of multi-family housing rental assistance programs, such as Section 8, to adopt and implement smoke-free policies for some or all of their properties.

Secondhand tobacco smoke causes heart disease and lung cancer in nonsmoking adults and is a known cause of sudden infant death syndrome or SIDS, respiratory problems, ear infections, and asthma attacks in infants and children. Even brief exposure to secondhand smoke can trigger acute cardiac events such

as heart attack. Cigarette use kills an estimated 443,000 Americans each year, including 46,000 heart disease deaths and 3,400 lung cancer deaths among nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke.

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*Tobacco Free Broome & Tioga is funded by the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control (TCP). The goal of the TCP is to increase the capacity of Bureau funded partners to change tobacco policies and social norms. Tobacco Free Broome & Tioga is dedicated to building healthier communities through tobacco-free living and subscribes to the recommended CDC Conceptual Framework and Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs guidelines.*