



For Immediate Release

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SMH launches smoke-free campus on Great American Smokeout

SLIDELL, La.—(Nov. 16, 2009)—In conjunction with the American Cancer Society’s Great American Smokeout, Slidell Memorial Hospital (SMH) will become tobacco-free beginning Nov. 19, 2009. This new policy upholds the hospital’s commitment to help reduce the risks of second-hand smoke and provide a safe, healthy environment to everyone who visits its facilities.

Since smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, Slidell Memorial is extending its longstanding no-smoking policy to include all indoor and outdoor spaces. The Surgeon General claims that the risk of developing heart disease increases by 25–30 percent and lung cancer by 20–30 percent when nonsmokers are exposed to second-hand smoke at home or at work.

The tobacco-free policy prohibits the use of tobacco products by all employees, volunteers, students, and contracted employees anywhere on the campus or on any sites operated by SMH. This prohibition applies to smoking in personal vehicles on the property, as well as on any sidewalks or streets within the boundaries of the campus. SMH also is asking visitors, patients and tenants to follow this policy.

“We all know the importance of improving our health. The decision to become tobacco-free aligns perfectly with Slidell Memorial’s commitment to promoting healthy living to all members of the community,” said hospital Chief Executive Officer Bob Hawley. “SMH’s smoke-free policy will provide a clean, fresh, and healthy environment for all patients and employees.”

SMH informed employees of its plans institute the smoking ban six months ago. The hospital has provided information, smoking cessation classes by a certified cessation counselor and other resources to assist with the transition to smoke-free, which culminates years of work toward decreasing smoking and its effects on employees and visitors of the hospital and its facilities.

ABOUT THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT

The American Cancer Society’s Great American Smokeout was inaugurated in 1976 to inspire and encourage smokers to quit for one day. As of 2008, 39.8 percent of the 43.4 million Americans who smoke have attempted to quit for at least one day in the past year, and the Great American Smokeout remains a great opportunity to encourage people to commit to making a long-term plan to quit for good. For more information, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345, or visit www.cancer.org.

ABOUT SMH

Slidell Memorial Hospital is a full-service 182-bed acute care not-for-profit community hospital located at 1001 Gause Blvd., in the heart of Slidell. Founded in 1959, SMH is the third-largest employer in St. Tammany Parish, employing 1,100 full, part-time and pool employees. SMH serves as a primary healthcare resource for families in St. Tammany Parish, La.; Pearl River County, Miss.; and the greater Mississippi Gulf Coast region. It is located online at <http://www.slidellmemorial.org>.