



News Release

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For More Information, Contact:
Jana Kettering, UDOH PIO
801-538-6339
Connie Kitchens, SLOC
A Healthier You 2002
801-212-2401

Utah's Health Organizations Applaud SLOC For Passing on the Smoke-Free Games Torch

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Salt Lake 2002 Winter Olympic Games and the Paralympic Winter Games represent the pinnacle of athleticism and the physical performance of a healthy human body. A coalition of Utah's health organizations are applauding the Salt Lake Organizing Committee (SLOC) for strengthening this Olympic image of optimal human health by continuing a tradition established by host cities in the mid-1980s and passing on the tobacco-free games torch of restricting tobacco use at Olympic venues. "This commitment to public health by SLOC will enable Utahns and visitors to enjoy the competitions and community events without being exposed to the hazards of second-hand smoke," said Dr. Scott Williams, Deputy Director of the Utah Department of Health (UDOH). The Department along with the University of Utah Health Sciences Center, Utah Division of Substance Abuse and 10 other health organizations in Utah are the partners in A Healthier You 2002™ who issued the formal congratulations to SLOC at the kick-off of their Healthy Behaviors tracker program on Monday.

According to SLOC's tobacco-free policy, smoking and use of other tobacco products will not be permitted at any indoor or outdoor venue under the control of the SLOC during the Games or the Paralympics. Smoking may be permitted in specific designated outdoor locations that are not part of the general spectator areas and that comply with applicable fire restrictions and requirements of Utah's Indoor Clean Air Act which specifies that such areas be located at least 25 feet from any entrance, exit, open window or air intake of a building.

SLOC's nonsmoking and tobacco free areas expressly will include:

- Any enclosed place of public access
- All indoor venue (competition and non-competition)
- The field of play and any seating areas at any venue including training venues
- All enclosed bars or restaurants at venues or in the catering areas of any of the Olympic and Paralympic Villages

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- All bedrooms, living quarters or other enclosed place in the Olympic and Paralympic Villages as well as all hospitality suites.
- All enclosed staff break areas and all Games and Paralympic transport vehicles

“This tobacco-free policy works in tandem with the goals of A Healthier You 2002, said project co-chair Kim Wirthlin, Assistant Vice President for University of Utah Health Sciences Center. “The initiative hopes to improve the health of Utahns by providing information, opportunities for participation, and motivational incentives to begin and maintain healthy behaviors such as quitting smoking, improving diets and increasing physical activity.” By the time the Olympic Torch reaches Salt Lake City, AHY2002 will have conducted more than 100 Gold Medal Mile events involving thousands of Utahns throughout the state. Other AHY2002 partners include the Utah Medical Association, Utah Nurses Association, Utah Hospital and Health Systems Association, and Utah’s 12 Local Health Departments.

Not only is SLOC’s Tobacco-Free policy supported by AHY2002 but also the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

Secondhand smoke contains the same 4,000 harmful chemicals as the smoke that smokers inhale, including many that have been proven to cause cancer. Many are treated as hazardous materials by toxic waste dumps and chemical plants and are especially dangerous to infants and children. The number of Utah children under the age of 18 who were exposed to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) in their homes was approximately 110,000; 25,000 of these children were under age 5 according to the UDOH’s 1999 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). The percentage of adults who reported that someone smoked in their home was approximately 10 percent. This study doesn’t account for exposure to ETS exposure in cars, other homes, bus stops, etc. Secondhand smoke can also affect nonsmokers by causing eye irritation, headaches, nausea, and dizziness.

For free information about eliminating secondhand smoke in your environment or quitting smoking, call the Tobacco Free Resource Line at 1-877-220-3466. Visit the website www.tobaccofreeutah.org for information on Utah’s tobacco laws and other helpful resources.