



Senior Housing Smoking Analysis: An Identification of Current Practices around Smoking Policies in Various Types of Senior Housing Communities in Southeast Michigan

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Executive Summary

Recently, state legislators have made it legal for landlords to declare their rental housing smoke free. Senior housing communities across Michigan are adopting smoking policies. Many people are concerned for the health and safety of tenants in and around senior housing complexes. The Senior Housing Smoking Project Team (SHSPT) at the Area Agency on Aging 1-B (AAA 1-B) conducted a survey to learn more about smoking policies and practices. The purpose of the survey is to identify current practices in senior housing regarding smoking. This research highlights notable information around smoking policies. Eighty-nine percent (89%) of buildings surveyed currently have smoking policies in place that restrict smoking at some level, with the other eleven percent (11%) placing no restriction on smoking. Forty-five percent (45%) of buildings plan to become smoke free and twenty-one (21%) do not have such plans.

Fifty-two percent (52%) of the respondent's buildings have designated smoking areas for their residents. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the buildings allow the residents to smoke outside and fourteen percent (14%) allow residents to smoke in their units. The most common length of notice that buildings give residents to prepare for the changes in smoking policies is six months. Fifty percent (50%) provide resources for residents who are interested in quitting smoking such as Freedom From Smoking or Quit for Life programs, nicotine patch, and health classes.

Additional research will need to be done in the future to gain a better understanding of what smoking policies are most effective. It is recommended that smoking cessation classes are offered when senior housing communities decide to become smoke-free.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Older adults living in senior housing communities contacted the AAA 1-B in regards to a lack of smoking policies and the lack of enforcement if the policies were established in their buildings. In response to the residents' request, the agency conducted a senior housing smoking survey to better understand what current smoking policies in senior housing are being used. The AAA 1-B SHSPT was formed as a direct response to the concerns of the residents. The team was charged with creating the survey to learn more about smoking policies and practices employed by senior housing management staff. The intent is that this information will be used by housing managers and senior advocates to consider the range of options available to senior housing communities as they balance protecting both the rights of smokers and non-smoking residents.

Methodology

The online survey contained thirteen (13) questions and was pilot tested by two service coordinators from senior housing complexes in Washtenaw County. In piloting the survey, particular interest was given to the feedback on the survey itself (i.e., how long it takes, were the questions straight forward, are there any missing questions that would be helpful or relevant to our efforts). After getting feedback from the participants, revisions were made to the survey and it was sent to one hundred and nineteen (119) senior housing management staff (i.e., service coordinators, housing managers, and building owners) in Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, and Washtenaw counties. Eighty-nine (89) of the buildings were selected randomly through the AAA 1-B database. Thirty (30) of the buildings were selected by a survey participant forwarding the survey to colleagues.

Limitations

This study has two fundamental limitations. The survey sample (32 participants) is somewhat small. In addition, the various types of senior housing were not equally represented in the sample. For example, independent living represented sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents. These limits impacted the ability to generalize the results to other senior housing locations in the area. Future studies will need to increase the sample size and type to obtain a representative sample from the various kinds of senior housing.

Survey Findings

The first series of questions on the senior housing smoking policies survey included specific questions about the building. Questions included: the respondent's role, the management company that oversees the building, the type of building and number of residents living in the building. The second series of questions were about the smoking policies. For instance, are there smoking policies in place, does the building plan to implement smoking policies, will

current residents be grandfathered in, how much notification was given to residents, who created the smoking policies, and what was the percentage of residents who smoke.

1. Survey participants were asked his or her role in the building:

The largest numbers of respondents represented were members of a buildings management team at seventy-four percent (74%). Service coordinators represented twenty-five percent (25%) of respondents.

2. Survey participants were asked the name of the management company that oversees the building:

The management companies mentioned includes:

- KMG Prestige
- American House
- Preservation Management
- CSI Support and Development
- Presbyterian Villages of Michigan
- Preservation Housing Management
- Scenic Hill Manor LLC.
- Ciena Health Care
- Lutheran Social Services of Michigan
- Forest City Residential Management, INC.
- The Associated Management Co.

3. Participants were asked to report the type of senior housing (i.e., independent/assisted living, HUD, subsidized, etc.):

The majority of survey respondents reported that their building was classified as independent living at sixty-five percent (65%) (See Chart A).

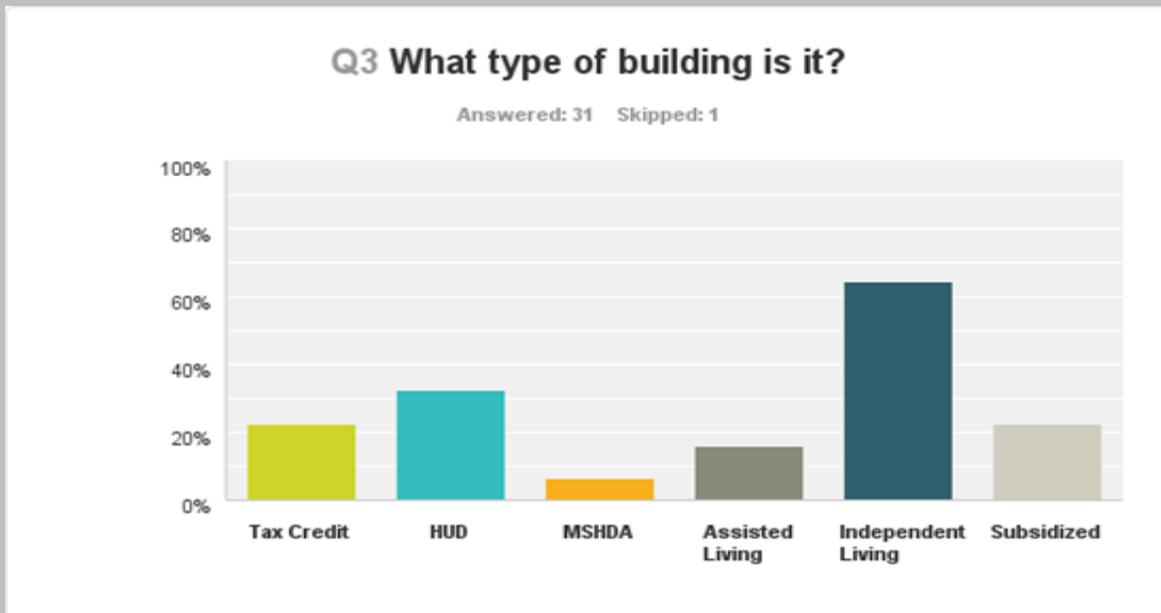


Chart A

4. Number of residents:

Survey participants were asked to give an estimation of the number of residents currently living in their facility. In total the respondents reported 4,514 residents.

5. The survey participants were asked if they had smoking policies, if not, do they plan to implement smoking policies:

Eighty-nine percent (89%) of respondents surveyed report their buildings currently have smoking policies in place that restrict smoking at some level, with the other eleven percent (11%) of respondents reporting no restriction on smoking. Forty-five percent (45%) of buildings who responded plan to become smoke free and twenty-one (21%) do not have such plans.

6. Survey participants were asked if current residents will be grandfathered in once the smoking policies go into effect:

Seventy-three percent (73%) of respondents report their building is planning to become smoke free do not plan to grandfather in current residents, thus, current residents will not be allowed to smoke or can smoke only in designated areas.

7. Participants were asked how much notification will be/was provided in reference to the implementation of new smoking policies:

Respondents reported that the length of notice provided to residents ranged from no advance notice to one year in advance. Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents answered that they gave residents a six month notice and twenty-one percent (21%) gave thirty (30) days.

8. Survey participants were asked who created the smoking policies:

Most of the respondents noted that the smoking policies were created by the management company at ninety-five percent (95%). The other five percent (5%) of the respondents stated that the smoking policies were created by HUD.

9. Survey participants were asked to explain the current smoking policies:

Fifty-two percent (52%) of the buildings with smoking policies in place have designated smoking areas for residents, thirty-three percent (33%) of these respondents allow residents to smoke outside, and fourteen percent (14%) only allow residents to smoke in their unit (See Chart B).

Other respondents mentioned areas where residents are not able to smoke on site; they must be off the property or in their vehicle, these are considered smoke free campuses. One respondent noted that only the residents who are grandfathered in are able to smoke in their units.

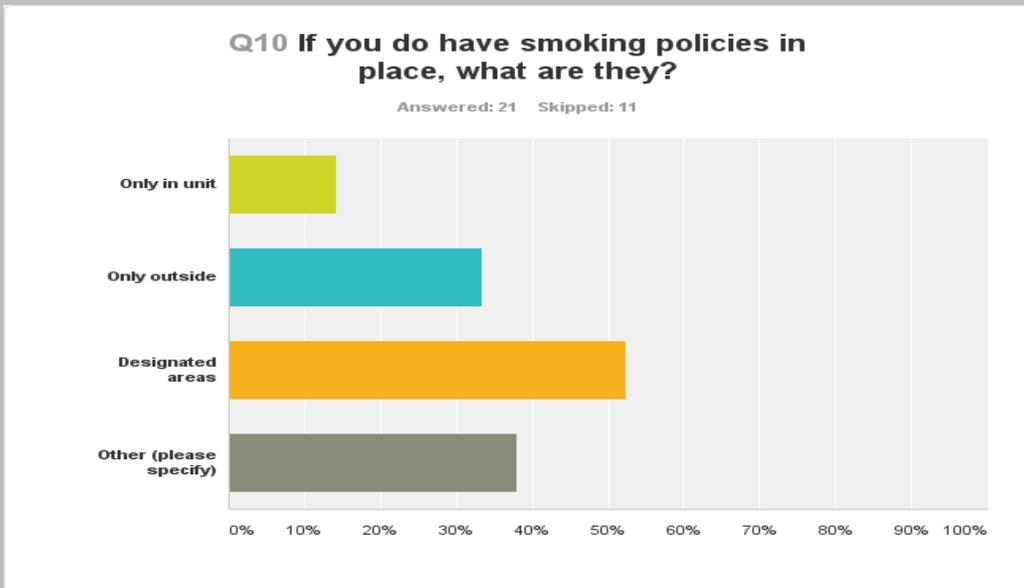


Chart B

10. Survey participants were asked what are the consequences for violating the smoking policies:

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of respondents issue a lease violation for residents that do not adhere to the policy, sixty-one percent (61%) will evict residents for violating the policy, thirty-three percent (33%) issue a write up to the resident and thirty-three percent (33%) give the resident a notice to quit (See Chart C).

One respondent mentioned that a write-up, lease violation, notice to quit or eviction will happen if the resident violates the policy on more than three occasions. Another respondent noted that two indoor offenses or three outdoor offenses are grounds for an eviction.

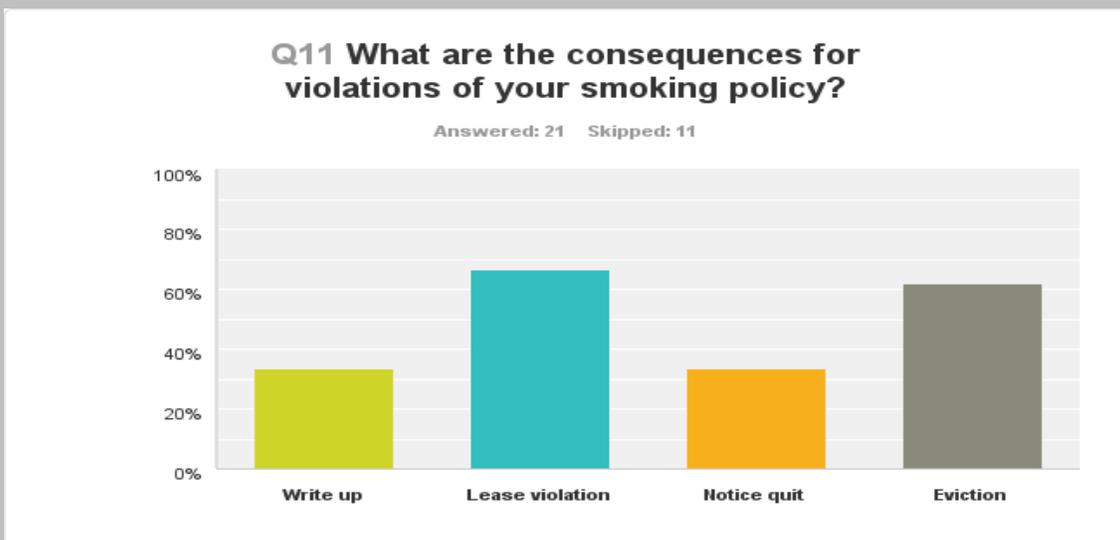


Chart C

11. The participants were asked to give an estimation of the number of times the smoking policy has been violated:

Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents answered never, thirty-seven percent (37%) responded rarely (five times or less), and sixteen percent (16%) responded that the policy has been violated often (11-20 times) (See Chart D).

One respondent noted that all the residents in their facility have complied with the new policy and they not longer have any residents who smoke.

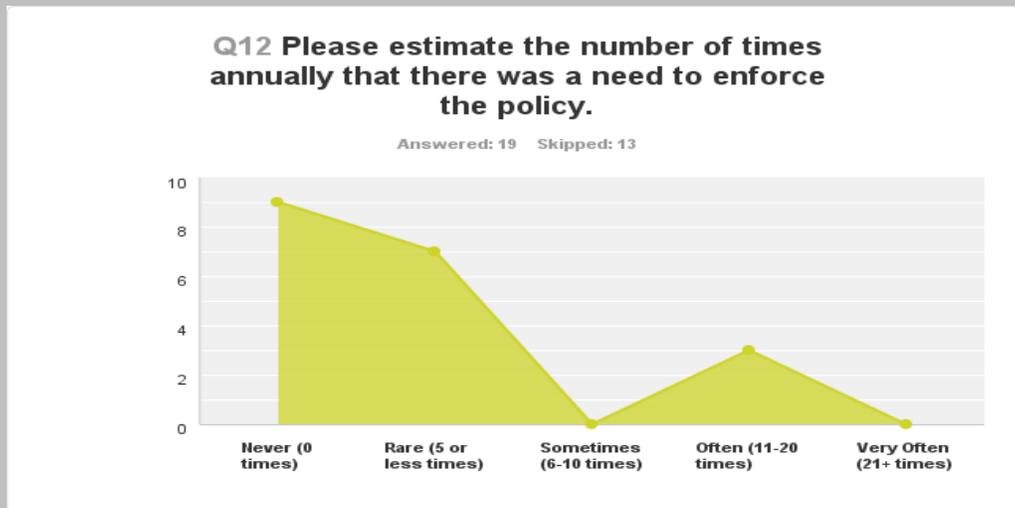


Chart D

12. Survey participants were asked to give an estimation of the number of residents in their building who smoke:

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of respondents answered 1-10%, twenty-seven percent (27%) answered 11-25%, and fifteen percent (15%) answered 26-50% (See Chart E).

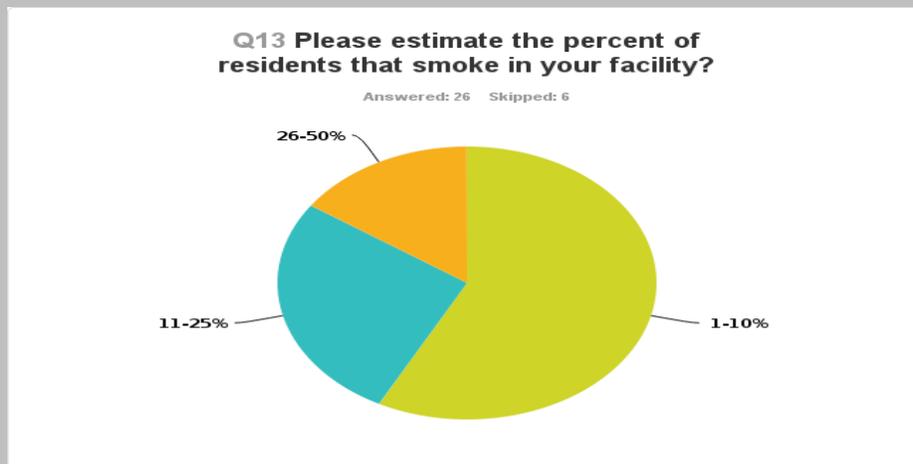


Chart E

13. Resources and Cessation Programs

Fifty percent (50%) or half of the buildings that restricts smoking provide resources for residents who are interested in quitting smoking:

Resources mentioned include; Freedom From Smoking (American Lung Association), Quit for Life (American Cancer Society), Nicotine Patch, coaching/buddy system, and health classes.

One survey participant noted that their service coordinator provides educational presentations on smoking cessation and written information on available help.

Survey Participants Additional Comments:

"We also did surveys to determine how many of our residents smoke, because we will become a non-smoking building on April 1, 2014."

"Residents are told in the initial visit that our property prohibits smoking anywhere. We discourage potential residents from living here if they plan or need to smoke."

"Our Property Manager held a community meeting regarding the Non-smoking policy and informed residents that this decision was mandated by HUD not the Management Company."

This survey highlights notable information about current practices around smoking policies in senior housing. There remains a lack of consistency about smoking policies in senior housing, however. During this survey knowledge was gained to better understand the various types of smoking policies and consequences when the policies are broken. Only eleven percent (11%) of respondents indicated their buildings place no restrictions on residents' smoking. Many of the survey participants noted that the policies were implemented by a higher entity such as the Management Company or HUD. Half of the survey participants indicated that their building provides resources for residents interested in smoking cessation.

Recommendations

More extensive research is needed to learn what the best practices are in senior housing surrounding smoking policies. Additional research would help with the implementation of best practices surrounding smoking policies in senior housing. One half of the respondents offered smoking cessation programs, which could be vital to the seniors who need or want to quit. Thus, smoking cessation classes should be offered when senior housing adopts smoking policies. Also, when adopting smoking policies, residents that smoke should be given sufficient time to decide what avenues to take in order to be compliant with these smoking policies, including the ability to relocate.