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## **New York State Law Banning Smoking on Playgrounds Takes Effect**

(SYRACUSE, NY) – A new statewide law prohibiting smoking at New York playgrounds between sunrise and sunset when children under the age of twelve are present took effect on October 10, 2013. The law aims to protect children from the dangers of toxic chemicals in secondhand smoke.

“Children should be able to run around and play at playgrounds without being exposed to smoke that harms their health,” said Jackie Shostack, coordinator for Tobacco Free Onondaga County. “This law is a common sense measure that should help keep playgrounds safe, clean, and free of cigarette butts.”

In recent years, hundreds of counties, cities, towns, and villages in New York State have passed laws or adopted policies to restrict smoking in their municipal parks and/or playgrounds. Nearly all the municipalities in Onondaga County have adopted such policies through Tobacco Free Onondaga County’s Young Lungs at Play initiative. The new law does not prevent local municipalities from adopting anti-smoking policies that are more rigorous than the new statewide law.

“We applaud the many local municipalities that support smoke-free parks and playgrounds,” said Shostack. “These types of policies are helping to change the social norms around tobacco use.”

Tobacco use remains the number one cause of preventable disease and death in the United States. Secondhand smoke is responsible for the deaths of over 3,000 New Yorkers every year.

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### ***About Tobacco Free Onondaga County (TFOC)***

TFOC is a New York State funded program administered by the Onondaga County Health Department. TFOC works in the Onondaga county community to strengthen tobacco-related policies to prevent and reduce tobacco use, and limit opportunities for exposure to secondhand smoke.