

## Special Audio Report Transcript

Headline: University of California Campuses Gear Up To Implement, Enforce Upcoming Smoking Ban

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### Text:

As a new academic year gets underway at the University of California, working groups on all ten campuses will be meeting to create smoke-free policies for their schools. Ahead of the systemwide ban -- which is slated to take effect in January 2014 -- the campuses are tackling questions about enforcement and feasibility. This is a special report for *California Healthline*, a daily news service of the California HealthCare Foundation. I'm Rachel Dornhelm.

It's not hard to find people at UC-Berkeley's Sproul Plaza happy to speak their mind about the coming smoking ban. Some students, like fourth year biology student Irene Cheng, said it didn't seem much different than other smoking bans in private establishments and at public beaches throughout the state.

***(Cheng): "I completely support it. I think smoking cigarettes is your own decision, but I shouldn't be affected by secondhand smoke and I don't want to get cancer because of your decision."***

Meanwhile, a few students and a scientist at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab -- who only wanted to give his first name of Stefano -- found the policy over the top.

***(Stefano): "We have cars running, nobody is telling car drivers to turn off their engines because their gasoline is burning fuels next to my lungs, but this is imposed on smokers."***

When the plan was announced earlier this year, a [Los Angeles Times editorial](#) accused policymakers of going too far: "The vast majority of UC students are 18 or older," it read, adding that "as long as their activities aren't illegal, dangerous to others or imminently life-threatening, ... the university should steer clear of outright bans."

But Colleen Stevens, chief of the tobacco control branch of the California Department of Public Health, says college bans are highly strategic. The age group with the highest prevalence of smoking in California is 18- to 24-year-olds.

***(Stevens): "For a long time, we thought if you keep a young person from starting to smoke during high school, they were pretty much good to go. Now we know we've done a good job of keeping people from starting to smoke as a high schooler. But when they go away to college, and it's a new experience and lifestyle, they often try new things."***

Stevens says the latest research shows if someone isn't smoking by age 26, there's a 99% chance they won't ever take up the habit. She says comprehensive smoking bans are a trend at college campuses across the country.

Kevin Confetti is the director of workers' compensation at the University of California. He works in the department that has been charged with helping implement the smoking ban. He says almost 600 campuses around the country have gone tobacco-free, including all five UC medical centers. Confetti says officials are paying close attention to how the process is going at schools like the University of Oregon. He says UC's plan is to reach out to smokers through education.

***(Confetti): "We really don't want to go down the punitive route because we don't think that will be as successful. We believe studies show that isn't the successful route. The real successful route is, again, education and support for folks in getting them to quit smoking."***

The University of California does have the option of citing and fining on-campus smokers as a result of California law [AB 795](#), passed last year. But rather than impose \$50 penalties, Confetti says it's better if the system can hand smokers literature about tobacco's risks and give them support to quit.

In addition to enforcement rules, Confetti says the campus working groups will consider issues like where medical marijuana fits into the ban. And how quickly the policies can be implemented based on the resources and size of each campus.

So has UC gotten any feedback on the sweeping policy from the tobacco industry?

***(Confetti): "Not yet, [laughs] But I'm sure we'll hear something from them because also part of this is that there will no longer be advertising of tobacco products allowed on any of the campuses. I'm sure we'll hear something at some point in time."***

UC has been hearing from the not-for-profit California Youth Advocacy Network, which works to make the state's young people tobacco free. Kim Homer Vagadori is the project director there. She says she remembers when getting a 20-foot smoke-free perimeter around California State University

buildings was a huge victory eight years ago. But she says there was little enforcement, and new studies came out on the dangers of outdoor second-hand smoke. She applauds the UC smoking ban but says her organization is working to see strong implementation of the policy.

***(Homer Vagadori): "And if that happens and if people are actually familiar with it and feel empowered to comply with it, then they won't have to deal with enforcement so much, but they can really focus on just promoting a healthier campus and all of this will change the social norm of tobacco use on campus and result in a healthier and cleaner campus."***

UC's Confetti says student input is welcome as each campus working group prepares its policy for the January 2014 implementation deadline.

This has been a special report for *California Healthline*, a daily news service of the California HealthCare Foundation. If you have feedback or other issues you'd like to have addressed, please email us at [CHL@CHCF.org](mailto:CHL@CHCF.org). I'm Rachel Dornhelm, thanks for listening.