

2005–2015

**SMOKE  
FREE**

**10**

Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of  
Rhode Island's Smoke Free Workplaces Act

Thursday March 5, 2015

5:00 – 7:30 PM

The Rhode Island Room

Johnson & Wales University's Harbor View Building

1150 Narragansett Boulevard

Cranston, RI 02905

TOBACCO  
FREE | RHODE  
ISLAND

Celebrate a Milestone

Honor Our Advocates

Usher in the Next 10 Years of Tobacco Free Success!

## CHOOSING HEALTH — 10 YEARS AGO

On March 1, 2005, Rhode Island became the 7th state in the nation to ban indoor smoking in restaurants, bars, offices, factories and just about every workplace in the state. Ten years ago, Rhode Island chose health.

The Public Health and Workplace Safety Act was a public health milestone, for the first time providing health and safety protections to all Rhode Islanders from deadly second-hand smoke exposure - proven to cause lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema, asthma and other illnesses. In passing this law, the RI legislature made the strong statement that all Rhode Islanders have a right to earn a living without risking their health. This public health success didn't just happen on its own. It was due to many years' work by a vast and strong movement of advocates, health professionals, lawmakers and citizens - YOU.

A decade of smoke free workplaces and public places, together with a high state tax on cigarettes and support for smokers to quit has delivered significant health benefits for Rhode Islanders. Rhode Island's adult smoking rate has seen a dramatic reduction from 23% in 2001 to 17.4% in 2013. The youth cigarette smoking rate has plummeted from 35% in 2001 to 8.1% in 2013. Rhode Island is proud to have the second lowest youth smoking rate in the US. Heart attack hospitalization rates in RI dropped 28.4% from 2005 to 2012.

## CHOOSING HEALTH — TODAY

Today, we continue our work toward creating a smoke free, healthier Rhode Island. Over the years, our movement has evolved. Today, Tobacco Free RI, a network of 50 organizations coordinating efforts to reduce tobacco use, continues to call on our leaders, our advocates, and our community members to choose health in Rhode Island. Thank you for joining us.

### Event Honorary Chair

Elizabeth H. Roberts  
*Secretary of the Executive  
Office of Health and  
Human Services*

Alison Buckser  
Robert Burke  
Lisa Carnevale  
Molly Clark  
Dr. Robert Crausman  
Anthony DeSisto  
Steve DeToy  
Seema Dixit  
Dr. Michael Fine  
Lori Fresina  
State Representative

Margaret Kane  
State Senator  
Joshua Miller  
Kevin O'Flaherty  
Nicholas Oliver  
Betina Ragless  
John Richard  
Susan Roberts  
Marti Rosenberg  
Benvinda Santos  
Megan Tucker  
Carol Hall Walker  
Karina Holyoak Wood

### Event Co-Chairs

Elizabeth Dennigan, Esq.  
Dr. Patricia Nolan

### Host Committee

Peter Asen  
Erin Boles Welsh

## Event Program

5:00 – 6:00 pm

### COCKTAILS & HORS D'OEUVRES

6:00 pm

### SPEAKING PROGRAM

- Welcome from **Karina Holyoak Wood**, Director, Tobacco Free RI, and Master of Ceremonies and former State Representative, **Elizabeth Dennigan, Esq.**
- Address from **Elizabeth H. Roberts**, Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services
- Video Greetings from **U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse**
- Remarks from **Dr. Michael Fine**, Director, Rhode Island Department of Health
- Greetings from **Ronald L. Martel, Ph.D.**, Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Co-Chair of the University Health & Wellness Committee, Johnson & Wales University, and former President of the National Association of College Auxiliary Services
- Greetings from the **Rhode Island General Assembly** delivered by **State Representative Arthur Handy** and **State Senator Joshua Miller**
- Recognition of public officials and advocate leaders of the smoke free movement

6:45 pm

### CAKE & COFFEE

7:30 pm

### CLOSE

# Smoke Free Heroes

Advocates and public officials who, together with many others in the smoke free movement, collectively achieved the RI Public Health and Workplace Safety Act of 2004, enacted 2005.

State Senator Susan Sosnowski  
Former State Representative,  
Elizabeth Dennigan, Esq.  
Former State Representative Gordon Fox  
Former Lieutenant Governor  
Charles Fogarty  
Former Attorney General Jeffrey Pine  
Former Attorney General  
Sheldon Whitehouse  
Dr. Patricia Nolan, former Director,  
Rhode Island Department of Health

## Rhode Island Department of Health

Robert Marshall  
Carol Hall-Walker  
Margaret Thomas  
John Egan  
Helen Drew  
Seema Dixit  
Lodie Lambright  
Donna Levesque  
Sally Mendzela  
Robert Vanderslice  
John Fulton

## Rhode Island Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals

Charles Williams  
Elizabeth Gretchen  
Bette McHugh

## In Memoriam

Betty Harvey, Tobacco Control Program  
Manager, RI Department of Health  
Judith Rae Miller, Tobacco Control  
Program Manager,  
RI Department of Health  
Jerry Maldavir, American Cancer Society  
State Representative Paul Crowley  
Ben Mondor, Paw Sox

## Rhode Island AFL-CIO

George Nee, President

## Campaign for a Healthy Rhode Island

Alison Buckser

## American Cancer Society

Steve Slaughter  
John Richard  
Lori Fresina  
Michelle Komosa  
Ron Lizotte  
George Zainyeh  
Kevin O'Flaherty  
Laura Hilderly  
Anthony DeSisto  
Elizabeth Cotter  
Katie Gates  
Don Gudaitis

## American Lung Association in RI

Margaret Kane  
Kathy Meier  
Molly Clark  
State Representative Arthur Handy

## American Heart Association

David Chatel  
Nicholas Oliver  
Miriam Plitt

## Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids

## Progreso Latino

Patricia Martinez  
Mario Bueno  
Fred Ordonez

## International Institute

Baha Sadr

## Rhode Island Medical Society

Steven DeToy  
Newell Ward

## Ocean State Action

Marti Rosenberg  
Kathryn Hopkins

## Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's SmokeLess States Initiative, RI Project Officer

Kitty Jerome

## Substance Abuse Prevention Task Forces

Lisa Carcifero, Woonsocket  
Nancy Devaney, Narragansett  
Diane Dufresne, Pawtucket  
Laura Hosley, Jamestown  
MaryAnne Martinez, East Providence  
Bunny Miller, Portsmouth  
Marie Waldeck, Central Falls

## Initiatives for Human Development

Sandra DelSesto

## Channel One, Central Falls

Victor Ramos

## Rhode Island Indian Council

Jaime Spears

## Rhode Island Committee on Occupational Safety and Health

James Celenza

## Seniors Against Secondhand Smoke, East Greenwich

Bob Houghtaling

## Media

Barbara Morse Silva, WJAR Channel 10  
Charles Bakst, Providence Journal  
Gene Emery, Providence Journal  
Felice Freyer, Providence Journal

## Businesses

Robert Burke, Pot Au Feu  
Joseph Silvestri & George Panas, Spumoni's  
Joshua Miller, Trinity Brewhouse  
Johanne Killeen & George Germon,  
Al Forno  
Michael Tamburro, Paw Sox  
Don Fowler, Independent  
Pharmacists Association  
The Stingrays

## Medical Professionals

Jeff Borkan, MD  
Susanna Magee, MD  
Anthony Thomas, DO  
Nicholas Tsiongas, MD  
Raymond Lewis, MD  
Teresa Jeraldo, MD  
Alvaro Olivares, MD  
Barbara Roberts, MD  
Pablo Rodrigues, MD  
Michael Vezerides, MD

# Thirteen Years in the Making

By Betty Harvey, March 1, 2005

As a friend said to me recently, "Just think. If you never do anything else in your life, you will be in the history books for your work in tobacco control." At the time, we were in the middle of another setback in trying to protect people from secondhand smoke, and I realized that no matter how difficult the work, it was true. The hundreds of people who have worked on tobacco control over the past decade or more have all made history together in creating one of the most powerful public health movements in American history. And in 1995 when I came to this work, I knew a time would come when people would not be exposed to secondhand smoke, but I wasn't sure it would happen in my lifetime. And suddenly, here it is.

Of course, you could date anti-tobacco programs well over eleven years ago.

Thirty years ago, Margaret Kane, Executive Director of the American Lung Association of Rhode Island, was a lone voice crying that smoking was dangerous to smokers and to those exposed to secondhand smoke. She was joined by Jerry Maldavir from the American Cancer Society in seeing the Smokefree Schools Act passed prohibiting smoking in all schools. The Smokefree Workplace Act made companies responsible for accommodating the needs of non-smokers. The Tobacco Sales to Minors legislation banned the sale of tobacco to children and youth, and made it illegal to distribute free samples or to sell loosies. But it took until 2004 to pass a law that makes almost all public places and workplaces completely smokefree on March 1, 2005. Rhode Island is the seventh state to do so. More are on the way.

But we begin our story in 1991 when the Rhode Island Department of Health was awarded a Project ASSIST grant (the American Stop Smoking Intervention Study for Cancer Prevention). Little did we know that we were about to become part of a movement that would change the landscape of public health. It is the story of the lowly Davids of public health up against the tobacco industry Goliath, a story filled with suspense and intrigue, power and greed, and the spirit of little guys banding together to make the impossible happen.

That first year, the National Cancer Institute convened the 17 funded state programs at a conference. There were a grand total of 35 people in attendance. By 2000, when we looked out at the participants at the World Tobacco Control Conference in Chicago, there were thousands of people in the largest auditorium I have ever seen. In 9 years the movement grew from 35 to tens of thousands.

One of the original 35 was Carol Hall-Walker. Maybe that's why her name appears in a tobacco company document as one of those Project ASSIST problem people the tobacco industry was complaining about. She was joined by Lodie Lambright, an indomitable tobacco foe, and in 1995 by Betty Harvey. The plan for ASSIST was to focus on policy change supported by media advocacy and programs. The focus on policy change took the tobacco industry by surprise, and states began passing strong legislation to protect people from exposure to secondhand smoke and to limit the sale of tobacco products to underage youth.

The tobacco industry responded, and at one time, we counted at least 10 tobacco company lobbyists covering the Rhode Island General Assembly in an effort to stop such legislation.

Meanwhile, on the monthly conference calls of the Program Managers in the 17 ASSIST states, two states were being sued by the tobacco industry for illegal lobbying, charges that were unfounded, but tactics the industry used to turn staff from their important work in tobacco control to preparing documents and working on the lawsuits.

Here in Rhode Island each year we were asked by an agency in Virginia for a list of the names of all agencies we funded and the amount of money we gave them. We waited for something to happen, but decided we were probably considered too small a potato for a major tobacco industry dirty trick.

Periodically we were able to add another public place to the growing list of places smoking was prohibited—dormitories, the State House, laundromats. But smoking prevailed in workplaces and in most public places.

The Department of Health had \$125,000 to spend on media advocacy to support new policies until 2001 when the RI General Assembly provided \$1 million in an appropriation for media campaigns to show the public how important it was to protect people, especially children and youth, from tobacco use and from exposure to secondhand smoke. A year later, another million provided for school and community projects to spread the word. And a year after that, another million was provided to help smokers quit.

We began to see a change in public opinion as more and more people quit smoking, and more and more people wanted to be in smokefree environments. They began to make their wishes known to their legislators. Representative Betsy Dennigan introduced smokefree legislation year after year. Each time the bill was introduced more and more people heard about the increasing evidence about just how dangerous secondhand smoke really is.

Rhode Island banded together with other New England states in 2002 to fight for and win a cigarette tax increase.

In 2003, Senator Susan Sosnowski introduced legislation in the Senate as Representative Dennigan introduced hers in the House.

It is impossible to underestimate the impact of the advocates from the Campaign for a Healthy Rhode Island. The group included our state level partners, the American Lung Association of Rhode Island, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, Ocean State Action, and community agencies, some funded by the Department of Health, some through a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and many individual volunteers. The tobacco control advocates had learned how to organize support from the majority of Rhode Islanders who want protections from secondhand smoke. They also learned to work with key decision-makers to increase the chance of passage of the Act.

The group blossomed and in 2003 worked with legislators to seek passage of the Worker Safety Act of 2003. It went down to defeat, but it was clear that the movement for protection from secondhand smoke had become very powerful, with 72% of Rhode Islanders supporting smokefree workplaces and public places. In the 2004 legislative session, Majority Leader Gordon Fox introduced the Public Health and Worker Safety Act of 2004, and was instrumental in working toward passage of the Act in the House, as Senators Sosnowski and Roberts shepherded it through the Senate.

Every year Dr. Patricia A. Nolan, Director of Health, went before the legislature to deliver the increasingly damning statistics on the dangers of exposure to secondhand smoke. Her ability to deliver the science without exaggeration made her a powerful voice for the science of the effects of this deadly product, and legislators told us that it was her persistence in delivering the facts that helped turn the tide. At a time when some Health Department Directors in other states held back, Dr. Nolan went everywhere to advocate for tobacco free public places and workplaces and for providing tobacco treatment to anyone who wanted it.

So today we celebrate the passage of the Worker Safety Act of 2004 into law. Workers in record numbers are protected from dangerous exposure to secondhand smoke at last, and Rhode Islanders can go into restaurants and other public places without being exposed. So when I am 93, telling my great grandchildren what I worked on at the Health Department in my younger years, I hope they will be amazed that anyone ever had to do such work. I can hear it now, "You mean you were part of the tobacco control movement? Wow. I can't even imagine people smoking cigarettes."

# Thank you to Our Sponsors



Lifespan



Tobacco Free RI is grateful for the generous support from an anonymous fund at the Rhode Island Foundation.

Thank you to Johnson & Wales University

Thank you to Kate Tierney and Nishtha Baranwal



Tobacco Free RI is a network of organizations and individuals working to reduce tobacco use – the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Rhode Island. TFRi is hosted at the American Lung Association in Rhode Island. Donations will go to support TFRi's ongoing work.

[www.TobaccoFree-RI.org](http://www.TobaccoFree-RI.org)