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WATERBURY HOSPITAL PREPARES TO BECOME A SMOKE-FREE CAMPUS BY 2009

Hospital employees compete in contest to design artwork for 'Clear the Air' campaign

WATERBURY – With just over a year to go before Waterbury Hospital becomes a completely smoke-free institution, employees and volunteers are taking part in a contest to see who can come up with the best artwork design for the hospital's new Smoke-Free Campus Initiative.

The campaign's slogan --- "*Let's Clear the Air! Start Now! Stop Smoking!*" – is the theme around which employees and volunteers are being asked to come up with a design to highlight the message on posters, brochures and other promotional materials. All employee and volunteer artwork designs will be put on display in the hospital on November 20 and staff will vote on the eventual winner of the contest. Coinciding with the American Cancer Society's 33rd Annual Great American Smokeout, November 20 will mark the beginning of Waterbury Hospital's year-long campaign to encourage all employees and visitors to refrain from smoking on hospital grounds.

The employee or volunteer who wins the design contest will win a broad range of prizes. Diane Woolley, Waterbury Hospital's Director of Human Resources, said the contest is meant as a way to help employees get on board with the goals behind the initiative. "We want our employees to take ownership of the message, which is essentially that we all want to work in a healthy environment," Woolley said. "That message should be something that resonates strongly for people who work in a healthcare facility like ours."

Employees will be offered a wide range of programs, counseling and other opportunities to help them quit smoking in time for November 20, 2009, which is the day that smoking will no longer be permitted anywhere on hospital property.

The hospital's Smoke-Free Initiative is similar to those adopted at other hospitals in the state and across the country. After November 20, 2009, any employee or visitor who is spotted smoking anywhere on hospital grounds will be asked to extinguish their smoking materials. The new rules apply to all areas of the hospital campus, including parking lots and satellite medical buildings.

With approximately 2,100 employees, Waterbury Hospital is one of the largest private employers in the Greater Waterbury region, and serves a vital role in the economic vitality of Western Connecticut. It is a private, non-profit acute care teaching hospital licensed for 367 beds and affiliated with the Yale School of Medicine, the University of Connecticut School of Medicine and Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Founded in 1890 as Waterbury's first and Connecticut's fourth hospital, Waterbury Hospital is a full-service community health-care institution with centers of excellence in primary care, behavioral health and orthopaedics.

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