



July 5, 2006

All faculty, staff, students, visitors, and corporate partners:

In keeping with the purpose of the Healthy Carolina initiative, the University will implement a policy to eliminate the use of tobacco products in and around all University buildings. Beginning August 1, the use of tobacco products will be prohibited inside all University-owned or -leased buildings and vehicles. The policy also restricts the use of tobacco products within 25 feet of any building and in other designated outdoor areas. This policy will apply to all faculty, staff, employees, students, contractors, volunteers and guests.

We anticipate that at some future date, the policy will be expanded to eliminate tobacco use on all campus property, including our grounds. Cigarettes and other tobacco products have become the most serious litter problem on campus, and the expansion of the policy will help solve this issue as well as improve the health of our university community.

Warnings about the danger of tobacco, our commitment to Healthy Carolina and our responsibility to the Carolina community and the state bolster our decision to become tobacco-free. For decades, studies have demonstrated that tobacco harms the health not only of users, but also of those exposed secondhand to tobacco products. Armed with this knowledge, we often have discussed the inconsistency of advocating healthy lifestyles for our students and employees while continuing to allow tobacco use on campus. As the state's flagship university, USC has an obligation to establish policies that promote the health and well-being of our students, faculty and staff and set an example for our state's citizens.

While the new policy does not require that members of the campus community stop using tobacco altogether, we understand that there will be an effect on tobacco-users. For some, the transition to a tobacco-free campus may be difficult, but the university has taken care to provide support to tobacco-users. The university encourages those who wish to end their dependence on tobacco to participate in free cessation programs like those offered by USC's Campus Wellness and the State Health Plan.

I invite you to visit the Healthy Carolina Web site, www.sc.edu/healthycarolina, for updates on Tobacco Free USC. The Web site also will provide definitions of tobacco-related terms, policy details, frequently asked questions and links to other sites with helpful information.

"Here's a health Carolina, forever to thee."

Sincerely,

Dr. Andrew A. Sorensen
President