

# SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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## ***MEDIA RELEASE***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## ***No Ifs, ands, or Butts*** **Tobacco-Free Policy Unanimously Approved by** **Suffolk County Community College Board of Trustees!**

**Riverhead, NY** – On the heels of the 2014 adoption of Legislator Spencer’s initiative, Tobacco 21 in Suffolk County, the Suffolk County Community College Board of Trustees unanimously adopted a resolution creating a Tobacco-Free Policy on all three Suffolk campuses! The resolution, approved on March 19<sup>th</sup>, builds upon Suffolk Community College’s current smoking policy by banning the use of all tobacco products on grounds, facilities, and vehicles controlled by the college.

Suffolk County Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D., was enthusiastic to speak before the Suffolk County Community College Board of Trustees before the vote on the resolution. “Keeping tobacco products off our college campuses will ensure that both students and staff members are in a healthy and safe learning environment,” stated Legislator Spencer. “It is a boon to the short and long term health of all students and faculty. I would like to congratulate and thank the Board of Trustees for passing this policy, which is a bold step in helping to reduce the rate of smoking among our youth.”

According to the American Cancer Society, in New York State the rate of smoking of the 18-24 age group (which stands at 21.6%) is 58% higher than that of high school students (which stands at 12.5%). In the past, it was believed that young people were more likely to become addicted to tobacco in their high school years. However, this has changed as legislation and restrictions have prevented tobacco companies from directly advertising to children. Now, college students are at a higher risk of becoming addicted.

Tobacco-free policies have been shown to drastically reduce the number of student smokers on campuses that implement them, benefitting both students and faculty. A tobacco free campus does not just prevent second hand smoke it also drastically reduces the amount of student smokers. According to the Department of Health Science at Indiana University, the rate of smoking among their own students dropped over 20% after tobacco-free policies were instituted in 2013.

In 2014, the Board of Trustees of Suffolk Community approached Legislator Spencer to sponsor a resolution in the Suffolk County Legislature to allow the Board to adopt additional restrictions on

– *MORE, MORE, MORE* –

smoking and tobacco-use on college property. The college, which is a County-funded institution, needed approval from the Legislature before a policy change could be implemented.

The new policy adopted by the Board, which will become effective on August 27, 2015, will restrict the use of non-traditional tobacco products, as well. The focus of this tobacco-free policy, as opposed to a smoke-free policy, is on preserving the health of everyone, smokers and non-smokers alike. It broadens constraints to include restricting the use of chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, hookah-smoked products, cigars, and clove cigarettes, on top of every day cigarettes.

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