

Hospital bans smokers from applying for jobs

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I WISH OUR MUSLIM HOSPITALS APPLY THIS HEALTHY "Islamic" RULE! (Dr Katme)

(NaturalNews) Applicants willing to work for Florida's Bert Fish Medical Center will no longer be allowed to smoke. Starting January 1, 2014, the medical center will join two other local hospitals requiring their workers to show no trace of nicotine in their system. Next year, smokers will be barred from applying, as the center's directors look to cut down the number of smokers working at their hospital.

"We are in the health care business, and we should be a role model," says Nancy Evolga, the Executive Director of Human Resources for the facility, citing 50 years of data proving the negative effects of tobacco use.

Employees mouth swabbed, charged \$25 per paycheck

Starting next year, all applicants will go through a special screening process where they will be tested for nicotine byproduct. Additionally, they will be required to sign an agreement committing to remain tobacco-free during their employment at the hospital. The nicotine prohibition goes as far as taking the workers' saliva from their mouth using a mouth swab.

Before that, in 2012, policy changed at the medical facility, requiring a \$25 charge per paycheck for those workers who smoke and choose to take a health insurance plan out with the company. Over time, the honor system broke down and the hospital began issuing random mouth swab tests to prove employee honesty. Employees hired after Jan. 1 who test positive for nicotine during mouth swab tests will be subject to "disciplinary action" and termination from the company.

Strangely though, this nicotine prohibition isn't scheduled to apply to volunteers, medical staff or the near 700 employees who were hired before the implementation date.

Hospital has good intentions for its employees

Human resource director Nancy Evolga conducted a health risk assessment survey on the roughly 700 employees and found that nearly 22 percent still use tobacco. In an effort to help the existing employees quit, Evolga is implementing a free tobacco-cessation counseling and nicotine replacement therapy session for employees and their families.

The money collected from the nicotine users' paychecks is currently gathered to fund a wellness initiative called *Fit for Life*. Offering yoga, walking clubs and healthy meals, the hospital hopes to instill new healthy disciplines for its healthcare staff.

Nicotine prohibition overshadows other unhealthy behaviors

By only addressing bad nicotine habits of its employees, the Bert Fish Medical Center overlooks a whole host of other bad health behaviors. Not everyone is embracing the smoking prohibition hiring practices. Indeed, the nicotine restrictions go way too far in interfering with what workers do while they are off duty. The policies micro-manage employees' personal lives when they are not on the job. This kind of nitpicking drug war mentality undermines employees' personal privacy.

Critics of the nicotine ban argue that, while smoking is condemned and used as grounds of termination, a whole host of other unhealthy behaviors are ignored in the process, including excessive drinking, prescription drug abuse and junk food binging, among other questionable personal choices.

When one bad behavior is vilified over others in this way, hypocrisy runs amuck and personal privacy and liberty is trampled on. How might the [hospital](#) set a better example rather than terminating its employees based on their private lives?

Lewis Maltby, President of the National Work Rights Institute, says, "Not all slopes are slippery but this one really is. The starting point for us is your boss doesn't have the right to tell you what to do in your own home. The hospital can tell you what to do during the week while you are at work, but your boss has no business telling you what you can and can't do while you are at home."

Hospital mandates shine light on their hypocrisy

Should the Bert Fish Medical Center have the power to dictate people's private lives - what they smoke, drink and eat?

How might the hospital's own dangerous medical practices be used against them as their nicotine prohibition turns into utter hypocrisy? Maybe the hospital needs to refine their approach to many deadly and dangerous "[health](#)" philosophies

they currently use. This may include radiation therapy, prescribing dangerous pharmaceutical drugs and so forth.

The hospital's chief executive officer, Steve Harrell, says, "Our mission is to improve the overall health of our Southeast Volusia community, not just treat illness. Bert Fish Medical Center sets an example for other businesses to improve the health of their workforce by not hiring tobacco users."

By micromanaging employee's personal lives, is the hospital, or any place of business for that matter, really setting a proper example?

Sources for this article include:

<http://www.news-journalonline.com>

<http://www.governing.com>

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