



Partnership for a  
Healthier Alexandria

## PARTNERS

The Honorable Marian Van  
Landingham, Chair,  
Steering Committee □ The  
Honorable William D.  
Euille and Alexandria City  
Council □ Alexandria Health  
Department □ Department  
of Human Services □  
Community Services Board  
□ Public Health Advisory  
Commission □ Inova Health  
System □ Senior Services of  
Alexandria □ Alexandria  
Chamber of Commerce □  
Alexandria City Public  
Schools □ Alexandria Police  
Department □ Alexandria  
Neighborhood Health  
Services, Inc. □ Campagna  
Center □ Alexandria Office  
on Women □ Alexandria  
United Way □ GWU School  
of Public Health □ City of  
Alexandria Fire/EMS □  
American Red Cross □  
YMCA Alexandria □  
Alexandria Cooperative  
Extension □ American  
Cancer Society □ City of  
Alexandria Pedestrian &  
Bicycle Program □ American  
Lung Association □ ECDC  
African Community Center  
□ Dept. of Recreation, Parks  
& Cultural Activities □  
ALIVE! Inc. □ NAMI □  
ACPS School Board □ Parks  
& Recreation Commission □  
Healthy Families  
Alexandria □ Northern  
Virginia Health Foundation  
□ Substance Abuse  
Education and Violence  
Prevention Advisory  
Committee □ Youth Policy  
Commission □ Families  
First of Alexandria, Inc. □  
CrisisLink □ Dept of  
Planning & Zoning □  
Alexandria Citizens □

January 12, 2009

Dear Honorable Mayor and Members of Council:

Approximately four months ago, the Environmental Health Work Group was established as the fourth work group of the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria. As you know, the mission of the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria is to promote a safe and healthy Alexandria through coalition building, collaborative planning and community action. The Partnership was formed in April 2006 to focus on health concerns that arose from Alexandria's first Community Health Assessment. Based on existing data and surveys of Alexandria residents, the Community Health Assessment Steering Committee established a priority list for action. As a result, the four work groups – Healthy Lifestyles, the Anti-Stigma Mental Health Hope Campaign, the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria and Environmental Health --were created to address those health priorities, with the Environmental Health Work Group the most recently formed of the four. I am honored to serve as the first chairman of the new work group.

The primary goal of the Environmental Health Work Group is to develop a set of strategies and interventions to implement some of the critical recommendations emanating from the Alexandria Community Health Assessment and the Alexandria Environmental Health Assessment with respect to two broad areas of public policy: Respiratory Health and Built Environment. To that end, the Work Group has met on five separate occasions and, at its meeting on October 22, 2008, reached a consensus on a policy resolution which it is recommending to you and the City Council for consideration. The wording of the resolution is as follows:

***The Environmental Health Work Group of the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria strongly encourages the City Council to establish a policy that would allow the city of Alexandria to contract only with smoke-free restaurants for the provision of food and beverages for meetings, conferences and other city-sponsored events.***

In discussing this resolution, members of the Work Group felt that this policy would be a natural extension of the City's long-standing support of a smoke-free Alexandria and the Alexandria "Proud to Be Smoke Free Restaurant Program". This program was originally created as part of a *Tobacco Cessation and Awareness* project from a VDH-Tobacco Settlement grant. Since its inception, 294 of a total of 392 restaurants in Alexandria have pledged to maintain smoke-free environments. Of the restaurants that are smoke-free, approximately 34 percent are full-service. The full-service restaurants are particularly important to target as they are where customers are exposed to tobacco smoke for extended periods of time.

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Alexandria Citizens □

I am pleased to tell you that this resolution was endorsed unanimously by the members of the Environmental Health Work Group that were present at the meeting on October 22, 2008. (A list of the members of the work group is attached.) The resolution received the endorsement of the Executive Steering Committee of the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria as well. (A list of the members is attached.) Further, it supports the *Environment and Health* Principle outlined in the Eco-City Charter by the Environmental Policy Commission and adopted by City Council last April 2008. Finally, the resolution was also discussed and adopted unanimously by the Alexandria Public Health Advisory Commission at its November 20, 2008 meeting. (A list of members is attached.)

The Environmental Health Work Group applauds the leadership you and members of City Council have exercised in pursuit of making Alexandria a greater smoke-free environment for all its citizens. We are anxious to assist you in this very worthwhile campaign for improving the public and environmental health of the city of Alexandria.

Most sincerely,

Richard E. Merritt  
Co-Chair, Environmental Health Work Group  
Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria

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