



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 5, 2010

NEWS CONTACT: Kelly Buck, Director of Marketing & Development, 315.253.6227 x313

UNITY HOUSE BECOMES SMOKE-FREE

Non-smoking policy promotes wellness, healthy living choices

Auburn, New York – Unity House of Cayuga County, Inc. is now a smoke-free workplace. Executive Director Elizabeth Werner announced last fall that the human services agency would incorporate a non-smoking policy as part of its new wellness program. The policy took effect on January 1.

“Unity House is purposely working to foster a culture of well-being for our staff and our consumers, and it was necessary to look at smoking as part of our overall wellness program,” said Werner. “Health insurance costs continue to climb, and we believe a thoughtfully designed and executed wellness program will help control those costs in the long run. Unity House must do all it can to promote healthy living, and a smoke-free work environment was the next logical step.”

Unity House’s smoking policy has changed and evolved over the years. The new expanded policy was developed to comply with the 2003 New York State Clean Indoor Air Act, and states that: “...all areas of the workplace and/or worksites are smoke/tobacco free without exception.”

Approximately one-third of Unity House’s 300 employees will be directly affected by the change. The Office of Human Resources is making information available to all employees about smoking cessation programs, wellness rewards, reimbursement accounts, and more. A new wellness committee has also been established, which will encourage healthy personal lifestyle choices, provide education and resources, and launch a variety of wellness initiatives.

“The committee is taking its charge very seriously,” said Sara Glauberman, human resources manager and co-chair of Unity House’s Wellness Committee. “Among other initiatives, we will soon be introducing ‘My Smoke-Free Future,’ a program employees

may access through the Mayo Clinic. This program is free to all staff and their families, and provides online access to information, resources, and support.”

The program also includes a weight management component, another health consideration for smokers seeking to quit.

“We realize that this change will be difficult for some, but we anticipate that a healthier workforce will mean a happier workforce,” said Werner. “By providing information and training opportunities that allow our staff to make better choices in self-care, we situate everyone for success. And ultimately our consumers will benefit as well – they thrive under the care of vibrant, happy, healthy staff.”

For more information about Unity House’s non-smoking policy, please contact Director of Marketing and Development Kelly Buck at 315.253.6227 x 313 or kbuck@unityhouse.com. Additional information about Unity House may be found at www.unityhouse.com.

Unity House of Cayuga County, Inc. provides transitional and permanent housing, rehabilitative, and employment services for individuals with mental health illnesses, developmental disabilities, and/or chemical dependencies from which they are recovering. A nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, Unity House partners with these individuals to develop their personal skills and potential, enabling them to live more full and independent lives. The agency serves more than 700 consumers a day in six central New York counties. Unity House is committed to freeing our communities of misconceptions associated with disabilities through innovation, education, and advocacy.

Unity House ~ Empowering Lives, Securing Futures