<INSERT AGENCY LOGO>

Contact <CONTACT NAME>

<CONTACT EMAIL> / <CONTACT PHONE>

**For Immediate Release**

**Newton Public Housing Goes Smoke-Free**

(Newton, MA) July 9, 2013… As of July 1, 2013, the Newton Housing Authority adopted a smoke-free policy affecting most of its units. Such a policy protects residents from secondhand smoke. Because smoke drifts between units and cannot be contained, the only fail-proof solution to the problem of secondhand smoke is for buildings to go entirely smoke-free.

According to Amy Sutherland, <insert title>, at the Newton Housing Authority, the process to go smoke-free in their six federally-funded multiunit buildings began two years ago, and was driven by resident demand. After receiving numerous letters from tenants complaining of drifting secondhand smoke negatively impacting their health, the Newton Housing Authority decided to do a survey of all tenants in their federally-funded buildings. “We were surprised and pleased to learn that 87% of survey respondents favored a smoke-free policy, including many who were current smokers,” said Sutherland. “The overwhelming support of our tenants solidified our decision to institute a smoke-free policy that is protective of tenants’ health.” Though the policy just took effect last week, residents were notified about the policy far in advance, and the housing authority even offered on-site tobacco cessation counseling through Newton-Wellesley Hospital for those who were interested in quitting smoking.

According to the Surgeon General, there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. By going smoke-free, residents of the Newton Housing Authority will be less likely to suffer from the effects of secondhand smoke, which include acute respiratory infections, ear problems, asthma, heart attacks, and certain cancers.

“I am excited that Newton is the first community in my collaborative to create a smoke-free policy for their public housing stock. It really speaks to their motivation to create a healthier living environment for their residents,” said Wesley Chin, Tobacco Control Coordinator of the 5 Community Collaborative, which includes Arlington, Belmont, Brookline, Newton, and Watertown.

With its new rule, Newton joins the growing number of communities throughout Massachusetts with smoke-free policies, a positive trend that protects residents from the serious health effects of breathing secondhand smoke.

For more information, please contact <NAME, ORGANIZATION, TELEPHONE>.