

# Barriers with Implementing the Federal Smoke-Free Public Housing Rule at Cuney Homes, Houston's Largest Public Housing Site

Antara Gupta; Surendranath Shastri, MBBS, MD, DPh; Loren Bryant, MS, MBA; Edna Paredes, MBA, CHES<sup>®</sup>

University of Texas at MD Anderson Health Disparities Research Department, University of Texas at Austin

## Introduction

Second-hand smoke exposure (SHSe) in non-smokers increases the chances of developing lung cancer by 20-30%. Since even brief smoke exposure is carcinogenic, there is no risk-free level of SHSe.<sup>1</sup> Residents of low-income housing are at a higher risk of SHSe because of the higher smoking prevalence in the population and the more frequent exposure due to connected living spaces.<sup>2</sup>

In 2018, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) implemented the **Smoke-Free Public Housing Rule (HUD-SFPHR)** to address these higher rates of SHSe in public housing communities. This rule mandated that all public housing sites implement a policy that prohibits smoking inside residential and communal buildings, as well as within 25 feet of these properties.<sup>3</sup>

## Objective

Currently, significant gaps exist in the implementation and adherence of the HUD-SFPHR. The purpose of this project is to **identify barriers interfering with the implementation of HUD-SFPHR at Cuney Homes**, Houston's largest public housing site with an 89.5% African-American/Black residential population.

## Methods



**Property observations** at Cuney Homes in April 2022 to estimate tobacco use in the community



**In-depth interview** with Cuney Homes' Houston Housing Authority (HHA) Service Coordinator to learn about the implementation of HUD-SFPHR



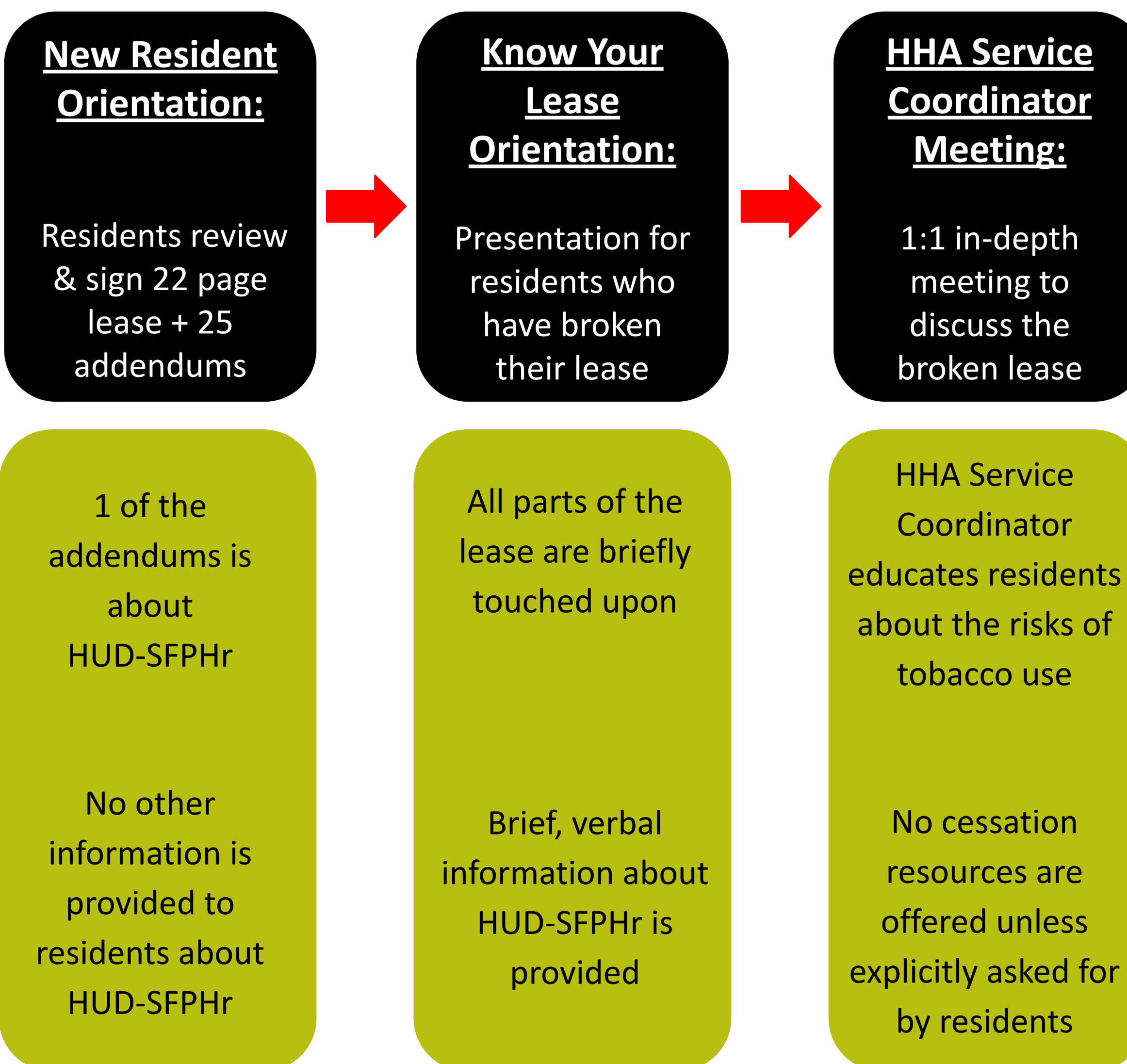
**Literature Review** of resources about tobacco cessation & implementing HUD-SFPHR<sup>3,4,5,6</sup>

## Results: Property Observations

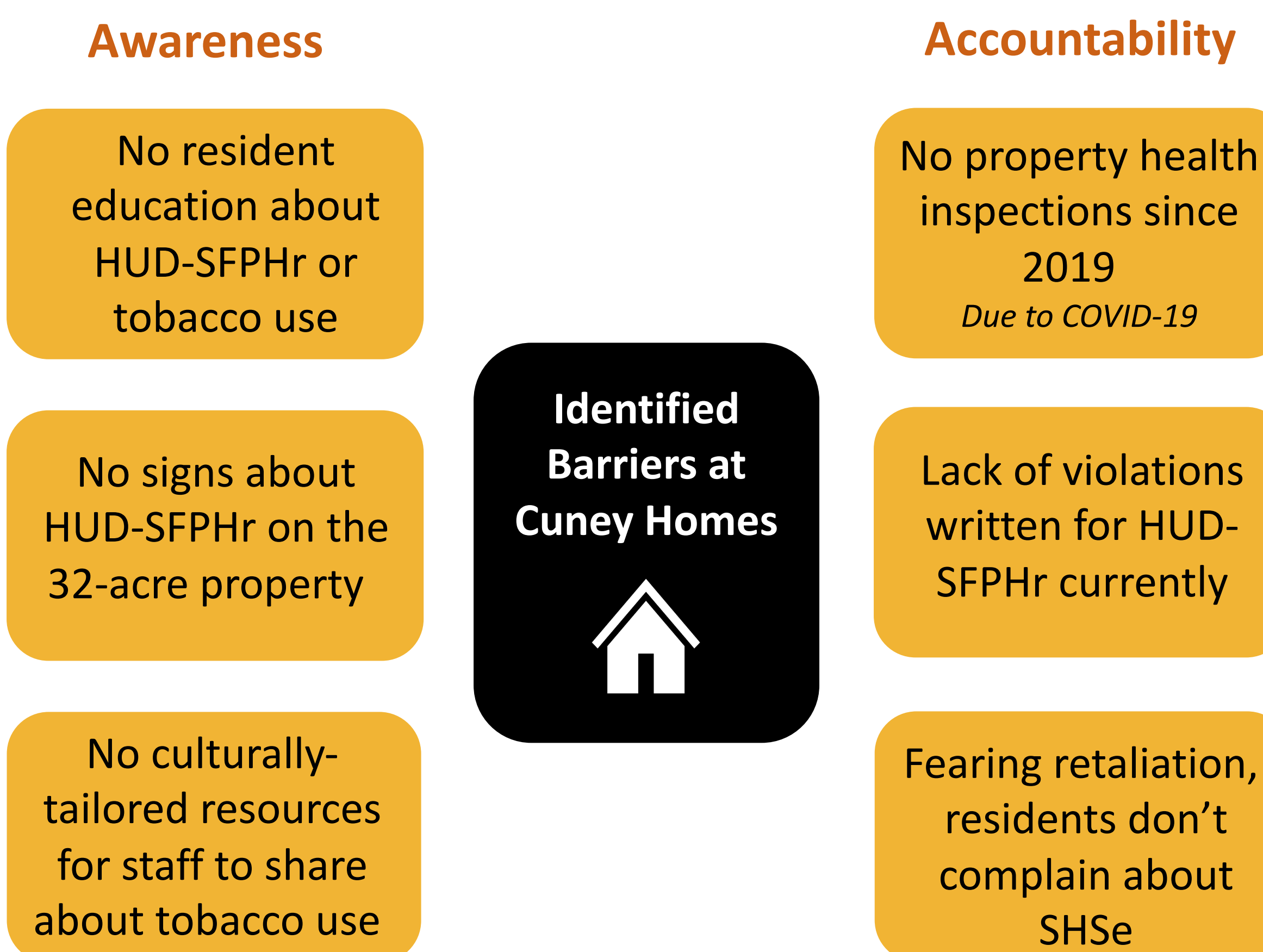
<b>2,311</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
Cigarette Butts & Litter Counted	Active Smokers Observed	HUD-SFPHR Signage	No-Smoking Signs

## Results: Interview & Literature Review

### How is Information about HUD-SFPHR Disseminated?



### What Barriers Hinder HUD-SFPHR Implementation?



### Tobacco Use in African-American Communities

- Menthol Cigarettes:** 9 out of 10 African American/Black people use menthol cigarettes, which are harder to quit<sup>7</sup>
- Targeted Marketing:** Stores in predominantly African American/Black neighborhoods are up to 10 times more likely to display tobacco ads than retailers in other areas<sup>6</sup>
- Community Support:** Historically, spiritual and faith-based support has positively influenced smoking cessation<sup>6</sup>

## Conclusions

The property observations revealed that residents at Cuney Homes are not adhering to HUD-SFPHR. Based on the barriers identified from the in-depth interview, the following is recommended:

- Training staff**
  - Give presentations about HUD-SFPHR, SHSe, & the risks of tobacco use during New Resident Orientation
  - Have conversations with residents about tobacco cessation
- Establishing community-based cessation programs**
  - Ambassador program led by public housing residents
  - Resource Hub: Community organizations/members (i.e., churches, community clinics) share information about tobacco treatment support & services
- Creating culturally tailored educational materials**
  - Printed material highlighting African American/Black populations & tobacco use
  - Providing cessation information about menthol cigarette use
  - Sharing the history of big tobacco marketing in African American/Black communities

**Next Steps:** Project Smoke-Free will be testing how implementing these recommendations will improve resident adherence of HUD-SFPHR

**Significance:** Addressing the barriers in implementing HUD-SFPHR will reduce the disproportionate amount of tobacco-related health conditions (such as lung cancer) in low-income & African American/Black communities.

## Acknowledgement

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