

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**NEBRASKA METHODIST COLLEGE OFFICIALLY CERTIFIED BY
THE BACCHUS NETWORK™ FOR TOBACCO-FREE CAMPUS POLICY**

Denver, CO, March 29, 2011 – The BACCHUS Network™, a leading national non-profit organization focused on health and safety issues concerning college students, has officially certified Nebraska Methodist College – The Josie Harper Campus as a Gold Award winner for its tobacco-free campus policy. The policy prohibits all tobacco use, sales, marketing, and promotions on all property owned, leased, or under the control of the university. Nebraska Methodist College's tobacco-free policy was implemented June 1, 2009.

Each year, BACCHUS accepts submissions for certification from colleges and universities across the country. The certification levels correspond to 11 standards of tobacco-free policy, ranging from prohibiting tobacco use and sales to divestiture of tobacco company stocks by the college or university. A full description of the certification levels can be found at www.tobaccofreeU.org. In 2010, Oklahoma State University received a Gold Award and Winona State University received a Silver Award.

“Nebraska Methodist College's tobacco-free policies provide immediate health benefits and initiate a larger social norm change,” said Drew Hunter, President/CEO of The BACCHUS Network™. More than 250 colleges and universities in the United States have adopted tobacco-free policies. Mr. Hunter expects the trend to continue. “Many campuses across the country are saying, ‘Tobacco use does not support the campus vision of health and well-being for all.’ Colleges have a responsibility to create environments that promote health and a lifetime of learning—for both tobacco users and non-users.”

Though tobacco use has decreased nationally, the young adult population (18-24) remains a higher-risk group. Tobacco-free policies increase cessation rates and decrease the likelihood of new users starting. Campuses certified through BACCHUS as tobacco-free or smoke-free receive a seal to be displayed on campus literature and websites to let future students and parents know that the institution is committed to the health of its students. BACCHUS will also publicize the certified campuses on their websites and in their publications.

“Conventional wisdom says that once a person turns 18, the risk of starting to use tobacco passes,” says Hunter. “This is not true, and no one knows it better than the tobacco industry. College students, especially, are still experimenting and solidifying health behaviors that they will take with them into the real world. We want to provide them with a healthy foundation upon which they will build their professional and personal lives.”

Founded in 1975 by students at the University of Florida, BACCHUS has grown from a small student group focused on alcohol abuse prevention to the largest college student organization in the country. Today, BACCHUS and its nearly 1,000 affiliate groups focus on topics ranging from drug and alcohol issues, to mental health concerns, to fitness and nutrition. For more information, please visit: www.bacchusnetwork.org.