

Protecting Hoosiers from Secondhand Smoke

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Each year in the United States, an estimated 50,000 deaths are attributable to secondhand smoke breathed by nonsmokers. Of these deaths, 3,000 are due to lung cancer, 46,000 due to heart disease and approximately 430 to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) each year.

The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that smoke free workplace policies are the only effective way to eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke in workplace. Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot eliminate exposure. Blue collar and service employees are less likely than white-collar indoor workers to be covered by smoke-free policies.

The Surgeon General has also concluded that workplace smoking restrictions lead to less smoking among covered workers.

Indiana is making progress but is lagging behind the rest of the U.S. As of July 2006, 23 communities have passed local smoke free air policies protecting approximately one-third of Hoosiers from exposure to secondhand smoke. A list of Indiana's Smoke free Communities can be found at: http://www.in.gov/itpc/PolicyFiles/policyFile_85.pdf.

Across the U.S., there are currently over 2,000 municipalities with local laws in effect that restrict where smoking is allowed. These include some of the largest cities, such as New York City, Los Angeles, San Diego, Dallas, San Francisco, and Boston. Seventeen states have state laws that require 100% smoke free workplaces, and/or restaurants, and/or bars protecting approximately 45% of the U.S. population from exposure to secondhand smoke. This includes California, Utah, South Dakota, Delaware, Florida, New York, Connecticut, Maine, Idaho, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, North Dakota, Vermont, Montana, Washington, New Jersey, and Colorado.

Entire countries that are smoke free include Ireland, Norway, Sweden, New Zealand, Malta, Uganda, Bhutan, Italy, Quebec, Canada, Scotland, Bermuda, and Spain.

Support for smoke free air laws is high among Hoosiers

- In 2004, seven out of ten Hoosier adults reported a indoor work policy prohibits smoking in all work areas.
- Seventy-one percent (71%) of all Hoosiers feel smoking should not be allowed in indoor work areas. Hoosier adults, especially nonsmokers, support smoke free policies in public places.
- Seventy-five percent (75%) of Hoosiers say they would not eat out more or less often if smoking were not allowed in restaurants.

