

CAMPAIGN For TOBACCO-FREE Kids[®]

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Study Shows Delaware Smoke-Free Law Dramatically Improves Health

WASHINGTON, DC (March 3, 2003) – As a growing number of communities and states across the country consider enacting smoke-free indoor workplace policies, a new study released today shows that Delaware's new smoke-free indoor workplace law is dramatically reducing exposure to air pollutants known to increase risk of cancer, respiratory disease, heart disease and stroke. This study is powerful new evidence that smoke-free workplace policies improve health and save lives and should spur communities across the country to act quickly to protect the health of their citizens. It also shows why Delaware legislators should reject efforts to weaken their state's life-saving new law.

Delaware's comprehensive smoke-free workplace law, which is one of the strongest in the country, took effect on November 27, 2002. It prohibits smoking in restaurants, bars and casinos as well as most other workplaces and indoor public spaces. Numerous cities, towns and counties across the United States have also acted to protect their citizens right to breath clean air, including Dallas, New York City and Boston. Demonstrating the strong public support for such measures, 71 percent of Florida voters in November approved a comprehensive smoke-free law governing restaurants and most indoor workplaces.

The new study by Repace Associates, a respected indoor air consultancy, measured air pollutants in a casino, 6 bars, and a pool hall in Northern Delaware before and after the state's smoke-free policy took effect. The study found that, prior to Delaware's law, all venues were "heavily polluted" with two categories of pollutants (1) indoor respirable particle air pollution (RSP), which averaged 20 times higher than outdoor air levels, and (2) cancer-causing particulate polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PPAH), which averaged five times higher than outdoor air levels. The study found that secondhand smoke contributed to 90 to 95 percent of the first kind of pollutants and 85 to 95 percent of the second kind. Measurements taken in the same locations after the smoke-free policy took effect showed that the levels of both kinds of pollutants were either dramatically improved or virtually indistinguishable from outdoor air. The study also dismissed a tobacco industry-backed solution to introduce ventilation systems rather than smoke-free policies, saying that satisfying the National Ambient Air Quality Standard in this manner was "unachievable."

The Delaware study reached this clear conclusion: "This air quality survey demonstrates conclusively that the health of Delaware hospitality workers and patrons has been endangered by secondhand smoke pollution. The Delaware Clean Indoor Air Act's ban on smoking in hospitality workplaces eliminates this hazard, and is well-justified regardless of any real or imagined economic impact."

There is an overwhelming scientific consensus that exposure to secondhand smoke causes disease, disability and death. Secondhand smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals and 69 known carcinogens including formaldehyde, cyanide, arsenic, carbon monoxide, methane, benzene, and radioactive polonium 210. A recent study by the International Agency for Research on Cancer of the World Health Organization concluded, "Nonsmokers are exposed to the same carcinogens as active smokers. The study

found that even the typical levels of passive exposure have been shown to cause lung cancer" among people who have never smoked. In addition to lung cancer, secondhand smoke is proven to cause heart disease, emphysema, and other illnesses and is responsible nationally for thousands of deaths each year. Studies show that kids are especially vulnerable to other people's smoke, suffering more respiratory problems, ear infections, and asthma.

Smoke-free air laws are good for the economy and business. Despite the tobacco industry's false claims that these measures can hurt business, the facts show that smoke-free laws do no harm, and can even improve business. One comprehensive study of restaurant sales tax data from 81 localities in six states found consistently that ordinances restricting smoking in restaurants had no effect on revenues. In addition, such laws, where enacted, reduce health care costs attributable to treating illnesses caused by secondhand smoke. A 1994 federal study showed, for example, that a ban on smoking in public places would save \$72 billion, lower insurance costs, and increase job productivity.

Delaware's outstanding results should spur communities and states across the country to act now to protect the rights of their citizens to breathe clean, smoke-free air. The evidence is clear that such policies improve health and save lives.

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A copy of the report can be viewed at the web site:

<http://tobaccofreekids.org/pressoffice/release611/wilmingtonsurvey.pdf>