



1400 EYE STREET, N.W. • SUITE 1200 • WASHINGTON, DC 20005  
PHONE (202) 296-5469 • FAX (202) 296-5427

## Smoke-Free Laws Protect Everyone's Right to Breathe Clean Air!

### ✓ **Secondhand Smoke is a Serious Health Hazard**

- **Everyone has the right to breathe clean air.** The [Surgeon General's 2006 Report](#) on The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke confirmed that secondhand smoke causes cancer, heart disease and serious lung ailments. As former Surgeon General Richard Carmona stated when releasing the report, "The debate is over. The science is clear. Secondhand smoke is not a mere annoyance but a serious health hazard."
- Secondhand smoke contains more than [7,000 chemicals, including at least 69 that cause cancer](#), including arsenic, ammonia, formaldehyde, and polonium 210.
- According to the [Centers For Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), more than 41,000 Americans die each year from lung cancer and heart disease attributable to secondhand smoke exposure.
- Studies show that children, the elderly, and people with respiratory illnesses are especially vulnerable to secondhand smoke. For example, children exposed to secondhand smoke are more susceptible to bronchitis, more severe asthma, eye and ear problems, and other ailments.

### ✓ **Reducing Secondhand Smoke Exposure Improves Health**

- Smoke-free policies are the only effective way to protect nonsmokers from secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke exposure [decreases substantially](#) among nonsmoking employees of restaurants and bars (and among nonsmoking adults in the general public) after implementing smoke-free laws.
- The National Cancer Institute, with the World Health Organization, in 2016 conducted an extensive review of the economic literature on tobacco control, finding: "Abundant evidence conclusively demonstrates that the implementation of comprehensive smoke-free policies improves the public's health. Hospitality industry workers, because of the intensity and duration of their exposure, often experience the most immediate benefits of smoking restrictions, including rapidly improved respiratory and cardiac health. Positive health outcomes are observed immediately and sustained over time."
- In recent years, a growing number of studies in smoke-free localities, states and countries found reductions in heart attack rates after smoke-free laws are implemented. After a thorough review of the evidence, an [Institute of Medicine \(IOM\)](#) committee of scientific experts concluded that exposure to secondhand smoke causes heart disease and smoke-free laws reduce the number of heart attacks and save lives.
- Just one month after Minnesota's Freedom to Breathe law went into effect, [exposure to a carcinogen from tobacco](#) in a group of nonsmoking hospitality workers fell by 85 percent, and nicotine exposure fell by 83 percent.
- A 2006 study conducted in Scotland shows smoke-free legislation improved pulmonary function in employees just one month after implementation ([JAMA](#)). A more recent study demonstrates improved respiratory health in barmen one year after Ireland's smoke-free law went into effect ([American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine](#), 2007).