Smoke-Free Indoor Air

cityhealth

AN INITIATIVE OF
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"Smoke-free laws make good business sense—they improve health, save lives, increase productivity, and reduce health care costs. Communities throughout the United States have made great strides in protecting workers and the public from secondhand smoke in the past decade, but too many Americans continue to be exposed to secondhand smoke on the job and in public places."

— Former CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H

What are clean indoor air policies?

Clean indoor air policies are regulations that prohibit smoking in indoor spaces and designated public areas. These policies lower the consumption of tobacco and protect non-smokers from the harmful effects of smoke around them.

How do smoke-free laws improve the lives of big city residents?

Smoke-free policies protect non-smokers from exposure to the harmful effects of tobacco and reduce smokers' consumption of tobacco at the same time. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), tobacco use is the largest preventable cause of death, disease, and disability in the United States.[1] Secondhand smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, many of which are toxic, and is a proven cause of cancer, heart disease, lung disease and other serious illnesses.[2]

Each year, more than 480,000 people die from smoking or secondhand smoke,[3] and another 8.6 million live with a serious illness caused by smoking.[4] The CDC finds that there is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke, and even brief exposure can be harmful to health.[5]

According to a comprehensive review by the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer, smoke-free policies do not harm businesses - and in some cases, may even improve revenues.[6]

The economic consequences of tobacco use exact a significant toll - the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that Americans pay at least $170 billion a year in direct medical costs and that our economy loses more than $156 billion in productivity.[7]

How well does the policy work?

The Community Preventive Services Task Force found strong evidence of effectiveness for smoke-free policies along with no negative economic consequences on businesses, such as bars and restaurants.[8] The policies increased the number of tobacco users who quit, and reduced the following:

- Total amount of tobacco consumed;

- Prevalence of tobacco use;

- Initiation of tobacco use among young people; and

- Tobacco-related illness and death.

What are some future policy issues to consider?

Cities, states, and other governmental bodies have widely instituted smoke-free laws but coverage exceptions remain. One key issue is ensuring that gaming entities (such as casinos and betting parlors) are covered under smoke-free workplace regulations in cities. At this stage, most gaming regulations are predominately regulated under tribal and state jurisdictions.

In addition, there is a question of including e-cigarettes (battery-operated devices, which generally convert nicotine, flavor, and other chemicals into an inhalable vapor) in clean indoor air regulations. According to the CDC, e-cigarette aerosol is not harmless "water vapor" and is not as safe as clean air.[9] E-cigarette aerosol contains nicotine, which is absorbed by users and bystanders. Studies have found other chemicals and toxins present in some e-cigarettes, although at levels lower than in cigarette smoke. Prohibiting the use of e-cigarettes in areas where conventional smoking is not allowed could preserve clean indoor air standards, protect bystanders from exposure to secondhand aerosol, and support tobacco-free norms. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other health experts are also concerned about the safety of these products because e-cigarettes can increase nicotine addiction among young people and may lead kids to try other tobacco products, including conventional cigarettes, which are known to cause disease and lead to premature death.[10]

Finally, there is substantial evidence that secondhand smoke from cannabis can be harmful to health.[11,12] With growing legalization of medicinal or adult-use cannabis, policymakers will have to decide whether to include cannabis explicitly in their smoke-free ordinances.

RESOURCES FOR CITIES ON IMPLEMENTING SMOKE FREE POLICIES
(taken directly from RWJF Roadmap)

Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights (ANR) A leading national lobbying organization dedicated to nonsmokers' rights.

PFP-Smoke-free 2007 Partnership for Prevention (PFP). Smoke-free policies: Establishing a smoke-free ordinance to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke in indoor worksites and public places - An action guide; 2007.

Comprehensive Smokefree Places| ChangeLab Solutions A model California ordinance regulating smoking in indoor & outdoor areas.

Smokefree Multi-Unit Housing| ChangeLab Solutions A roadmap of policy options to protect tenants from secondhand smoke.

US HUD-Smoke-free A website with resources to help you plan for, implement, and build support for smoke-free policies for Public Housing Agencies and Multifamily federally assisted properties.

HealthPartners - Community Health Advisor Helps decision-makers identify the policies and programs that will have the greatest effect on health, mortality and medical costs at a county, state or national level.

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9. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Quick Facts on the Risks of E-cigarettes for Kids, Teens, and Young Adults. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/Quick-Facts-on-the-Risks-of-E-cigarettes-for-Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults.html. Published 2019.

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11. Moir D, Rickert WS, Levasseur G, et al. A comparison of mainstream and sidestream marijuana and tobacco cigarette smoke produced under two machine smoking conditions. *Chem Res Toxicol*. 2007;21(2):494-502.

12. National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network. *Air and Health: Particulate Matter*. http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showAirHealth.action#ParticulateMatter.