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Indiana Study Reveals High Levels of Air Pollution in Casinos

Secondhand smoke exposure puts casino employees at risk

LANSING, Mich. – The Indiana Campaign for Smokefree Air and the Indiana Academy of Family Physicians recently released a study revealing that the state’s casino workers and customers are breathing air containing 14 times more secondhand smoke than the air outside.

The Purdue University study assessed indoor air quality in all 11 casinos in Indiana during visits in April and May, 2008. This inaugural in-depth study of air quality in Indiana casinos revealed levels of fine particle indoor air pollution that were significantly higher than the maximum recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Despite the ventilation systems installed at the casinos, employees and patrons are still exposed to unhealthy levels of secondhand smoke. The researchers explained that employees and customers on average will exceed the EPA 24-hour standard for fine particle air pollution exposure in under four hours.

The release of this report comes at a time when the National Council of Legislators from Gaming States (NCLGS) has formally adopted a resolution calling for states to take action to make all gaming worksites smokefree.

“Without smokefree laws, Indiana’s employees are forced to risk their health in order to receive a paycheck. Michigan is no different,” said Judy Stewart, campaign manager for the Michigan Campaign for Smokefree Air. “We applaud the efforts of the NCLGS and encourage Michigan lawmakers to follow their lead and make passing smokefree legislation in Michigan a priority.”

In Michigan, an Air Quality Tour concluded that nonsmoking sections are not an effective barrier against secondhand smoke. From October 2005 to April 2006, the air quality of 90 bars and restaurants was measured in eight Michigan cities, including Ann Arbor, Detroit, Flint, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Novi and Saginaw. The tour findings showed high levels of fine particle air pollution, despite the provision of nonsmoking sections. Many nonsmoking sections maintained air pollution levels that the EPA deems unhealthy.

About CSA

The Campaign for Smokefree Air is a grassroots coalition with more than 260 members, including leadership from the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association of Michigan, Michigan Health & Hospital Association, and Michigan State Medical Society, as well as other statewide groups that support making workplaces, including restaurants and bars, smokefree. For more information about the Campaign for Smokefree Air, please visit www.MakeMIAirSmokefree.org.

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