



Campaign for Smokefree Air Newsletter

The American Lung Association (ALA) has chosen May as Asthma Awareness Month. The Michigan chapter of the ALA is organizing four asthma walks around the state in order to raise funding for asthma research and education in Michigan. Asthma walks will be held in Detroit, Flint and Grand Rapids on Saturday, May 6, 2006, and in Lansing on Saturday, May 13, 2006.

For a person without asthma, normal breathing occurs when the lungs are fully open allowing air to move in and out freely. But for asthma sufferers their lungs have inflamed, super-sensitive airways. When an asthma attack happens the lining of their lungs swell, mucus clogs the airways and the muscles around the airways tighten making breathing difficult, and sometimes impossible.

Asthma currently affects approximately 935,000 people in Michigan. Secondhand smoke is one of the major contributors to asthma in children under five. The chemicals that are in tobacco smoke linger in the air and cling to walls, furniture and clothing, they can trigger asthma attacks and can make attacks more frequent and more severe for both children and adults.

According to a Norwegian study, exposure to cigarette smoke during childhood substantially increases the risk of developing asthma during adulthood. The study also reports that exposure to secondhand smoke during childhood is responsible for nearly 25 percent of adult asthma cases, suggesting, that nearly a quarter of all adult asthma cases could have been prevented. The serious health conditions associated with secondhand smoke exposure, like asthma, are why the Campaign for Smokefree Air is continuing its fight for a smokefree Michigan.

For more information about secondhand smoke and its affects on your health visit www.MakeMiAirSmokefree.org. To participate in an asthma walk in any Michigan location please visit www.alam.org.

716,000 kids in Michigan are exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes, that is more than the population of Lansing, Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Battle Creek and Flint combined.



In the Spotlight: Red Robin – Smokefree Restaurant

Red Robin restaurants began in the 1940s with Sam's Tavern -- a small tavern perched on a Seattle hilltop near the University of Washington campus. In 1969, the tavern became the first official Red Robin. Red Robin has grown significantly since then, with 163 restaurants and 136 franchised restaurants, and are becoming smokefree all across the United States. The Red Robin restaurant in Brighton, Mich. was the first in the state to go smokefree in December 2004. They have been reaping the financial benefits and customer praise ever since.

"By becoming smokefree we have seen only positive outcomes," said Brian Schoch, general manager of the Brighton Red Robin. "Sales have been great and we have seen an increase in repeat guests visiting and more families coming to enjoy the healthy, fun and friendly atmosphere."

Many people do not know that restaurant and bar employees are 50 percent more likely to develop lung cancer than the general population. This is largely due to consistent exposure to secondhand smoke. Smoke knows no barriers; a separate section in a restaurant will not stop the harmful toxins from traveling into other areas of the restaurant.

Despite what our opponents say, there have been no independent studies that prove smokefree laws negatively affect the bar and restaurant industry. In a poll conducted in March 2005, the Campaign for Smokefree Air found that 80 percent of voters in Michigan would go to restaurants "more often" or "just as often" if they became smokefree. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that smokefree business nationwide collectively save \$35 to \$66 billion a year due to a decrease in premature deaths and tobacco-related illnesses.

Red Robin is committed to serving an imaginative selection of fresh, high quality food in a healthy, fun, family atmosphere. They live by their core values, which are honor, integrity, continually seeking knowledge and having fun. They pride themselves by endless "Unbridled" acts for guests. They go above and beyond what is required of serving its guests and being smokefree is one of them.

To find a smokefree restaurant in your area visit www.smokefreemichigan.org/restaurants.htm.



Smokefree is Catching On

Smokefree worksites continue to be a new, healthy trend across the U.S. and the globe. Two new states and a Canadian province have recently joined the efforts to protect workers and patrons from the dangers of secondhand smoke. Colorado and Arkansas joined 17 other states, in addition to Washington D.C., in passing a comprehensive smokefree workplace legislation for workers in April and Ontario will go smokefree at the end of May 2006.

Arkansas

Governor Mike Huckabee signed a statewide smoking ban into law just minutes after the Senate gave final legislative approval with a 29-3 vote. The law will prohibit smoking in nearly all workplaces, including restaurants. It is estimated the state could save at least \$19 million in health care costs annually with the smoking ban. "This was a vote for the majority of those who have suffered in silence, choked in silence, coughed in silence and taken medication to overcome the effects all those years in silence," said Huckabee.

Colorado

Colorado Governor Bill Owens signed a comprehensive smokefree workplace legislation that will clear the air in almost all Colorado workplaces including restaurants and bars. According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, secondhand smoke is the number one source of indoor air pollution containing hazardous chemical compounds such as arsenic and formaldehyde. The costs attributable to secondhand smoke in Colorado are estimated to be \$180 million annually for direct medical expenses and \$19 million for loss of life.

Ontario, Canada

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act, the new Provincial tobacco legislation, will go into effect on May 31. The law will make all enclosed public places and enclosed workplaces in Ontario smokefree. Displays of tobacco products in retail outlets will also be banned.

For a complete list of smokefree states and the status of prospective smokefree states, please visit www.MakeMiAirSmokefree.org.



MSU Could Go Smokefree

Smokefree policies are being introduced at colleges, universities and in their dormitories across the country. Clean and healthy environments are achieved by students and faculty working through the governing bodies of the universities. In some universities, smoking is prohibited in all dorms, some restrict smoking to designated floors, wings and other areas while some have no ban.

Legislators are trying to pass House Bill 5825 that would ban smoking in dormitories at public and private colleges, including community colleges and universities in Michigan. Chewing tobacco would also be banned and violators could be fined up to \$100. Currently, the decision is made independently at each college and university. Rep. Glenn Anderson, D-Westland, sponsored the bill to promote a safer living atmosphere for students who live on campus and are affected by secondhand smoke. The bill was referred to the House Judiciary Committee recently and its co-sponsors include Reps. John Stahl, R-North Branch, Aldo Vagnozzi, D-Farmington Hills, Lee Gonzales, D-Flint Township, Morris Hood III, D-Detroit, and LaMar Lemmons III, D-Detroit.

“It is important now that in a living community that the most important rights of students are upheld. While many argue for the “smokers right” to smoke, we argue for the rights of non-smokers to stay healthy, in a smokefree environment,” said Kevin Newman, Residence Halls Association president at Michigan State University. “For those with asthma or other conditions, smoke can have drastic health consequences. And at the end of the day, smoking is a choice. Breathing secondhand smoke is not.”

MSU, the only remaining Big Ten school that allows smoking in dorms, is considering eliminating smoking in dorms by next fall. In February, MSU Residence Halls Association, the governing body of students living on campus, voted to recommend that administrators ban smoking in the dorms. Based on recent study results, the RHA indicated that 73 percent of students living on campus think that smoking should not be allowed in the dorms and 68 percent said they would support a complete ban on smoking in the halls. Currently, the proposal is pending approval from the University Housing Department. The final decision will be made by the university’s Board of Trustees, who in 1994 approved a smoking ban in university vehicles and in campus buildings, except residence halls.



"It is what the students want," Newman said. "The survey clearly shows students' opinion."

RHA initiative came after numerous complaints in the last few years from students living on campus. Feedback that students provided showed the support of a smoking ban. Even though the rights of smokers were a concern, it is decided that secondhand smoke intrudes on the rights of non-smokers because of the danger to their health.



Smokefree Air 2010 Challenge

The American Lung Association is challenging all communities and states to be smokefree by the year 2010. In January 2006, the American Lung Association released its 4th Annual *American Lung Association State of Tobacco Control Report Card* and called on local and state policy makers to continue regulating secondhand smoke.

“Smokefree air laws are an overwhelming success that the public has embraced,” said John L. Kirkwood, President and CEO of the American Lung Association, “Every American deserves smokefree air now. We are challenging policymakers from governor to council member to protect the public by passing strong smokefree air laws.”

The Report Card

First released four years ago, the *American Lung Association State of Tobacco Control* report card grades all U.S. states and the federal government on a variety of many tobacco control policies including smokefree air. The laws are graded against certain criteria and determine each state’s relative progress in a letter grade comprised of A, B, C, D or F. The report can be found online at www.lungusa.org.

Four years ago, there were only two states that had smokefree public places and workplaces, including restaurants and bars – California and Delaware. Already in 2006, a total of 19 states have gone smokefree, in addition to Washington D.C., a promising step for a smokefree U.S.

Making the Grade in MI

Several counties around Michigan have passed smokefree worksites initiatives. However, Michigan lawmakers need to take a statewide stance on the issue instead of a piecemeal approach of county by county. Our goal is to protect ALL Michigan workers, including bar and restaurant employees, from the deadly toxins of secondhand smoke. Michigan has a failing grade and its time to join the ranks and step up to the Smokefree Air 2010 Challenge.

To find out how to contact your lawmaker, lists of smokefree states and to see the states in the process of becoming smokefree visit www.MakeMIAirSmokefree.org.