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Campaign for Smokefree Air Announces New Surgeon General's Report on Secondhand Smoke *Report's Findings Reinforce Need for Smokefree Air in Michigan*

Lansing, Mich – The Campaign for Smokefree Air (CSA) has announced the release of Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona's new report on the harmful effects of secondhand smoke.

The report, titled "The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke," is the first report by the Surgeon General's office on secondhand smoke in 20 years. The last report, released in 1986, marked the first comprehensive scientific analysis of the health data surrounding secondhand smoke. This report has come at a time when many cities and states have become or are in the process of becoming smokefree.

"The Surgeon General's report gives an enormous support to our efforts here in Michigan," said Judy Stewart, campaign manager for CSA. "We hope that this report helps Michigan lawmakers understand the dire importance of smokefree workplace policies in the Great Lakes state."

In addition to addressing the health effects of secondhand smoke exposure, including lung cancer, the new report states that ventilation systems are ineffective at reducing the harm caused by the emission of cigarette smoke in restaurants and bars. Adverse health effects for bar and restaurant customers, including employees, who work in an establishment that allows smoking cannot be controlled by ventilation. Ventilation systems may help eliminate the smell of smoke but it will not protect people from the cancer-causing effects of secondhand smoke and the thousands of harmful particulates it carries into the lungs.

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The report also highlights the unequal occupational hazard for restaurant, casino, bar and hotel employees. Secondhand smoke exposure at work causes food service workers to be 50 percent more likely than the general population to develop lung cancer. It is also estimated that only 43 percent of the country's food service workers are protected against secondhand smoke, while 76 percent of white-collar workers are. Furthermore, children and ethnic minorities remain at greater risk than other segments of the population.

The report identifies smokefree workplace laws as an effective way to protect all Americans and help eliminate these disparities. It also refutes the argument that these laws are detrimental to the financial well-being of businesses. There has been no independent study that has proven that smokefree laws negatively affect the food industry. By creating smokefree work environments, business owners eliminate a variety of associated costs, including higher health, life, and fire insurance premiums, higher worker absenteeism, lower work productivity, and higher workers' compensation payments. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates the cost savings of eliminating secondhand smoke in the workplace to be between \$35 and \$66 billion a year.

Currently, more than 20 states, Washington, D.C. and more than 2,200 communities have passed smokefree laws. Most recently the city of Philadelphia and the states of Hawaii and Louisiana passed smokefree laws, both to be implemented in the next several months.

“We have made great advances as a country, but here in Michigan the progress is slower and our residents remain unprotected,” Stewart said. “Until we change that, we will continue to push for passage of smokefree laws in Michigan. It is time our state joined the smokefree air movement and put public health needs first.”

Secondhand smoke contains more than 4,000 harmful substances. It is estimated that it causes between 35,000 to 45,000 deaths each year from heart disease and 3,000 deaths to lung cancer, specifically among non-smokers. This year alone, more than 564,000 Americans will die from cancer, 30 percent of those deaths will be caused by tobacco.

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A statewide poll, conducted by Troy, Mich.-based John Bailey & Associates on behalf of CSA, finds that nearly two-thirds of Michigan registered voters polled favor a new law creating smokefree environments in all Michigan workplaces.

The campaign represents a bipartisan approach to making Michigan smokefree. Senators Ray Basham (D-Taylor) and Tom George (R-Kalamazoo) along with Representatives Barb Vander Veen (R-Allendale) and Brenda Clack (D-Flint) are each sponsoring measures to make workplaces, restaurants and bars smokefree. The bills that are currently in the legislature are Senate Bills 394 and 395 and House Bills 4624 and 4625. The legislation was introduced in April 2005 and awaits committee action in the House Commerce Committee and the Senate Government Operations Committee.

CSA is a grassroots coalition founded by the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association and American Lung Association of Michigan, as well as other statewide groups who support eliminating secondhand smoke dangers in workplaces, restaurants and bars.

For more information about the Campaign for Smokefree Air, please visit www.MakeMIAirSmokefree.org.

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