

## Have a heart and pass statewide smoking ban

If enacted, legislation to comprehensively eliminate smoking statewide in public indoor places including restaurants and bars would be one of the most significant public-health measures in Indiana history.

Smoke-free laws protect nonsmokers from environmental tobacco smoke's harmful effects and encourage cessation among smokers. And of ultimate importance, it creates the message, especially to our children, that smoking in public is not socially acceptable, so imperative for creating enduring cultural change.

Other than the "irritation factor," the public demand for creating smoke-free public places has traditionally been based on the long-term consequences to non-smokers such as chronic coronary artery disease and lung cancer. But now there is additional persuasive evidence for the value of indoor smoke-free laws: Five major studies have demonstrated immediate decreases in acute heart attacks after smoke-free ordinances have been enacted in communities:

A 2004 British Medical Journal study reported that admissions for acute heart attack in Helena, Mont., decreased by 42 percent after implementation of a comprehensive smoke-free law in public places. When the ordinance was suspended by court order six months later, the heart attack rate increased to the level before the ordinance was instituted.

A comparable study presented at the 2005 American Heart Association Annual Scientific Sessions demonstrated a 27 percent decrease in the number of acute heart attacks for 1 1/2 years after enactment of a comprehensive smoke-free law in Pueblo, Colo. New published data reveals that this effect continued after three years of study, demonstrating a 41 percent drop in heart attack hospital admissions.

Similar results were reported in The European Heart Journal in a 2006 investigation of people younger than 60 in the Piedmont region of Italy after implementation of an encompassing smoke-free law.

As cited in the Journal of Preventative Medicine in 2007, enactment of a smoke-free law in Bowling Green, Ohio, was associated with a 39 percent reduction of hospital admissions for heart attacks and congestive heart failure.

A 2004 analysis published in the American Journal of Public Health found New York's smoke-free air law resulted in more than 3,800 fewer admissions for heart

attacks and saved the state more than \$56 million in direct health-care costs annually.

Other studies show similar results. Research conducted in Scotland and Ireland established that heart attacks fell 17 percent and 14 percent respectively in the year after the enactment of smoke-free laws. Another study from the Harvard School of Public Health demonstrated significant reductions in heart attack deaths after institution of the Massachusetts statute. Additionally, Indiana University recently examined the effect of the Bloomington ordinance. Although statistically limited, the results are consistent with other previous reports. The 2006 U.S. Surgeon General's Report on involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke affirms that less than 30 minutes of exposure to secondhand smoke can precipitate a heart attack. This results from a number of acute changes in coronary arteries.

It has long been accepted that secondhand smoke increases the long-term risk for heart disease by 30 to 50 percent among non-smokers chronically exposed. These newer scientific studies provide powerful undeniable evidence of the immediate devastating effects environmental tobacco smoke can have on the heart.

This is another compelling reason why the legislature should pass a comprehensive smoke-free statute this year. House Speaker Pat Bauer and Gov. Mitch Daniels, show your bold and progressive bipartisan leadership in support for this important legislation.

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