

THE FACTS: Secondhand Smoke & Smokefree Wyoming

Health Issues & Perils

The debate is over. Secondhand smoke is dangerous. It causes disease and premature death in children and adults who do not smoke. Exposure of adults to secondhand smoke has immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and causes coronary heart disease and lung cancer. The scientific evidence indicates there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

- Cigarette smoke is a soup of more than 4,000 known chemical compounds, hundreds of which are known to be toxic or carcinogenic. Secondhand smoke has been designated a known human carcinogen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- Breathing secondhand smoke for even a short time can have immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and interferes with normal functioning of the heart, blood and vascular systems in ways that increase the risk of heart attack. Nonsmokers who breathe secondhand smoke at home or work increase risks of developing heart disease by 25-30 percent and increase risks of developing lung cancer by 20-30 percent.
- Even brief exposure to secondhand smoke can result in upper airway changes in healthy persons and can lead to more attacks in children who already have asthma.
- Separating smokers, cleaning the air and ventilation cannot protect people from secondhand smoke.

**Smokefree
Wyoming**
**Our health
Our right**

The Economics

Economic surveys of sales tax receipts in Albany and Laramie counties, each of them with a year's experience of smokefree ordinances (Laramie and Cheyenne), show no evidence of economic impact in restaurants or bars as a result of the ordinances. Information about adversely affected businesses in Laramie and Cheyenne is unsupported by statistical survey and analysis. Reports to the contrary are anecdotal.

Meanwhile, consider the costs of continued smoking in public, enclosed areas. Restrictions on indoor smoking not only protect workers and customers from secondhand smoke, but they also tend to reduce smoking rates. Both results produce health care savings for workers, employers and the state.

- Every year in Wyoming, an estimated 676 adults die prematurely from smoking-attributable causes, primarily from lung cancer and heart disease.
- An estimated 60-110 people in Wyoming die each year from others' smoking (secondhand smoke and pregnancy smoking).
- An estimated 12,000 Wyoming children now under the age of 18 ultimately will die from smoking.
- Annual health care expenditures in Wyoming directly caused by tobacco use: \$136 million.
- Annual health care expenditures in Wyoming from secondhand smoke exposure: \$8.9 million.
- State Medicaid program total health expenditures caused by tobacco use: \$37 million.
- Citizens' state/federal taxes to cover smoking-caused government costs: \$120.9 million, or \$590 per household
- Smoking-caused productivity losses in Wyoming: \$155 million
- Smoking-caused health costs and productivity losses per pack sold in Wyoming: 47.26.
- Add to the above items the non-health costs of extra cleaning and maintenance made necessary by tobacco smoke and tobacco-related litter.

Statewide Health Imperative

Wyoming needs a statewide smokefree law. Relying on municipal ordinances leaves workers outside city limits completely unprotected. The public health imperative is urgent, and it is urgent for all Wyoming citizens. Protecting clean indoor air cannot rely on a piecemeal city-by-city or county-by-county approach, and the citizens cannot wait.

The statewide law also spares proprietors who may want to provide a smokefree environment from worrying about possibly alienating their smoking patrons. A statewide law puts everyone on a “level playing field,” on which restaurants and bars compete on the basis of the quality of goods, food and service.

A statewide law protects everyone in public places now.

‘Optional’ is No Option

Wyoming lawmakers and policy makers need an overriding public health reason to butt into the affairs of a private business owner. This is it. This is a real good reason: protecting the health and safety of Wyoming citizens. Several hundred businesses in Wyoming have chosen to go smokefree on a voluntary basis. They should be commended for protecting workers and customers and for realizing that clean air is good economics for themselves.

But protecting health and safety should not be optional. In cases of serious health issues, government steps in. We require fire extinguishers and clean food preparation areas. We require safe electrical wiring. We all obey traffic laws to protect public safety. Protection from secondhand smoke in a retail business or workplace should not be optional. Even when customers may be able to exercise choice and take their business elsewhere, workers may not be able to move to a better environment. They need government protection.

Wyoming Citizens Want Clean Air

Wyoming voters polled in September said they overwhelmingly support a law to prohibit smoking in all indoor public places. They believe rights of customers and employees to breathe clean air outweigh rights of smokers. And they will go to smokefree restaurants and bars about the same or more often.

- Sixty-six percent of the voters surveyed said they support a smokefree proposal for Wyoming. In fact, 51 percent of the people surveyed *strongly* favor smokefree indoor public places. Support cuts across party lines, age and sex.
- Given a choice, 74 percent of voters say rights of customers and employees to breathe clean air in restaurants and bars are more important. Only 12 percent say smoker rights are more important.
- If restaurants are smokefree, 92 percent of Wyoming voters say they will go to restaurants more often (41 percent) or about the same (51 percent). If bars are smokefree, 66 percent of voters say they will go out to bars more often (21 percent) or about the same (45 percent). Only 8 percent say they will go to bars less often.

For More Information

This fact sheet has been prepared by Smokefree Wyoming, a coalition of diverse groups working for passage of a state law to restrict smoking in restaurants, bars and public workplaces. The coalition includes American Cancer Society, American Heart Association and Coalition for Tobacco Free Kids. Contact XXXXX.

Find more information about statements made in this document:

www.uwyo.edu/wysac/HealthEducation/Tobacco/TobaccoReports.aspx

www.tobaccofreekids.org

www.surgeongeneral.gov

www.cdc.gov

The survey quoted above was conducted by Harstad Strategic Research Inc. in Sept. 26-Oct. 1, 2007.