



IRHA Comprehensive Smokefree / Vapor-free Air Policy Statement

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death and illness in the United States, and secondhand smoke is the third leading cause of preventable death, according to the US Surgeon General. The FDA warns the public of the health risks posed by E-Cigarettes.

Grassroots efforts throughout Indiana have been successful in many areas with the comprehensive smokefree air law passage. Nineteen Hoosier communities (including the Indianapolis International Airport) have passed comprehensive policies that protect workplaces, restaurants, and bars; and sixteen other communities protect workers in workplaces and restaurants. But at present, our State has a myriad of State and local Smokefree Air Laws that confuse Hoosiers and local business owners, tilt the “playing field” for businesses, and do not protect all workers.

Since the Surgeon General’s Report clearly states there is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure, ALL Hoosier workers should be protected. Also, a comprehensive statewide smokefree air law will “level the playing field” for all Hoosier businesses by not discriminating between similar types of business. For example, private clubs and casinos may still allow smoking under current law; and public restaurants cannot. The state government has the constitutional right to protect public safety.

During preliminary testing of E-Cigarette samples, the FDA found concentrations of nicotine (a poison), diethylene glycol (poison), and nitrosamines (carcinogen). No data has been produced to prove the safety of these devices.

The “American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers” (ASHRAE) states: “At present, the only means of effectively eliminating health risks associated with indoor exposure is to ban smoking activity... No other engineering approaches... have demonstrated or should be relied upon to control health risks from ETS.” (Environmental Tobacco Smoke is a term used to describe Secondhand Smoke during the time of this quotation.)

Each year in Indiana, approximately 1,200 adult nonsmokers die from exposure to secondhand smoke. And secondhand smoke costs Hoosiers approximately \$1.3 Billion in excess medical expenses and premature loss of life.

Many communities that pass smokefree air laws see a significant decrease in heart attack admissions after the law is enacted. A study was conducted in Monroe County, Indiana, that demonstrated a correlation between secondhand smoke exposure of nonsmoking adults with heart attack admissions. Before the smokefree air law was passed, Monroe County had 17 such admissions. During the same amount of time after enactment, that number was reduced to 5, while control groups and the smoking population remained similar.

Numerous studies using sales tax statistics and other sources of information have shown no long-term harm to business revenues due to smokefree air laws, including “Off Track Betting” facilities. A study comparing three Indiana OTB facilities was recently conducted. One of the OTB facilities became smokefree in 2007, and the comparison analysis showed no decrease in business to the smokefree location.

Summary Policy Statement

“Since tobacco smoke has been proven to be a leading cause of preventable death and disease in Indiana, the U.S. Surgeon General has stated that there is “no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure,” and the FDA warns of the health risks posed by E-Cigarettes after preliminary testing. Therefore, the Indiana Rural Health Association supports a Comprehensive Smokefree / Vapor-free Air Policy to protect ALL Hoosier workers. This Policy would include the workers of casinos, bars, private clubs, cigar and hookah bars.”

Sources:

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“Indiana’s Smoke Free Air Laws” Fact Sheet. Indiana State Department of Health, Tobacco Prevention / Cessation Division

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“Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke” Fact Sheet. Indiana State Department of Health, Tobacco Prevention / Cessation Division.

“Reduced Admissions For Acute Myocardial Infarction Associated With A Public Smoking Ban: Matched Controlled Study”. Dong-Seo, Ph.D., Mohammad R. Torabi, Ph.D. Indiana University, Bloomington 2007

“The Impact of a Local Smokefree Air Law on Wagering at an Off-Track Betting Facility in Indiana” Jonathan T. Macy, Erika L. Hernandez. Department of Applied Health Science, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Department of Statistics, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. 2011