



---

Public Information Office • P.O. Box 3902, Las Vegas, NV 89127 • 702.759.1390  
www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org

---

## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Jennifer Sizemore  
(702) 759-1225

### **New Surgeon General's Report on Secondhand Smoke**

LAS VEGAS – June 28, 2006 – A new U.S. Surgeon General's Report reinforces the importance of the Southern Nevada Health District's efforts to educate the public about the serious health hazards of secondhand smoke and advocacy for public policies that would protect the public at indoor workplaces and public places.

"The findings of the Surgeon General's report clearly demonstrate the fact that secondhand smoke is not just an annoyance. Secondhand smoke causes lung cancer, heart disease, sudden infant death syndrome, low-birth-weight, asthma, bronchitis and other serious illnesses and is responsible for tens of thousands of deaths each year in the United States," said Dr. Donald Kwalick, chief health officer for the health district.

In 2005 the health district commissioned a survey of Clark County adults that found:

- Nearly 90 percent of residents surveyed believe people should be protected from secondhand smoke.
- 46.3 percent of adults reported being exposed to tobacco smoke on the job at least one day a week.
- The majority of all adults (75 percent) reported that smoking was not allowed anywhere in their home and 45 percent of Clark County smokers also reported smoking bans in the home.
- Over one-third of all adults (36.5 percent) reported that they avoided going to a public or private place because they knew that they would be exposed to secondhand smoke.

Smoking is the single greatest avoidable cause of disease and death and the Surgeon General's report, released Tuesday in Washington, DC, reached six major conclusions:

1. Many millions of Americans, both children and adults, are still exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes and workplaces despite substantial progress in tobacco control.
2. Secondhand smoke exposure causes disease and premature death in children and adults who do not smoke.

(more)

3. Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), acute respiratory infections, ear problems and more severe asthma. Smoking by parents causes respiratory symptoms and slows lung growth in their children.
4. Exposure of adults to secondhand smoke has immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and causes coronary heart disease and lung cancer.
5. The scientific evidence indicates that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke
6. Eliminating smoking in indoor spaces fully protects nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke. Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot eliminate exposures of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke.

Because of the overwhelming evidence that smoke-free laws protect health without harming business, there is growing momentum across the United States and around the world to enact such laws.

Fourteen states, Washington, DC and Puerto Rico have passed statewide smoke-free workplace laws that include restaurants and bars. The states are: California, Colorado (effective July 1), Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii (effective Nov. 16), Maine, Massachusetts, Montana, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont and Washington (the Montana and Utah laws extend to bars in 2009, while the DC law does so on January 1, 2007). Two other states – Florida and Idaho – have smoke-free laws that exempt only stand-alone bars. Hundreds of cities and counties across the United States have also taken action, as have whole countries including Ireland, England (effective 2007), Scotland, Uruguay, Norway, New Zealand, Sweden, Italy, Bhutan and Bermuda.

The evidence is also clear that smoke-free laws protect health without harming business. Dozens of studies and hard economic data have shown that smoke-free laws do not harm sales or employment in restaurants and bars and sometimes have a positive impact. Some of the strongest evidence comes from New York City, where a report found that, in the year after the city's comprehensive smoke-free law took effect March 30, 2003, business receipts for restaurants and bars increased, employment rose, the number of liquor licenses increased, virtually all establishments are complying with the law, and the vast majority of New Yorkers support the law. There is also growing evidence that smoke-free laws can save money. A study released in August 2005 by the Society of Actuaries found that secondhand smoke costs our country \$10 billion a year in health care bills, lost wages and other costs.

A fact sheet on the evidence that smoke-free laws do not harm business can be found at: [www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0144.pdf](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0144.pdf). For more information about the Southern Nevada Health District tobacco control program access its website at [www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org](http://www.gethealthyclarkcounty.org).

####