DRAFT Sample Only * will need to be adapted to your county

The Truth About

Secondhand Smoke

Q. What is Secondhand Smoke?

Secondhand smoke (SHS) is the mixture of poisons and toxic chemicals generated by burning tobacco. It has more than 4700 poisonous chemicals, over 50 of which are known to cause cancer¹ including:

Irritants and toxins:

- Hydrogen cyanide
- Sulfur dioxide

Carcinogens and Mutagens:

- Arsenic
- Benzo(a)pyrene
- Formaldehyde
- 4-aminobiphenyl

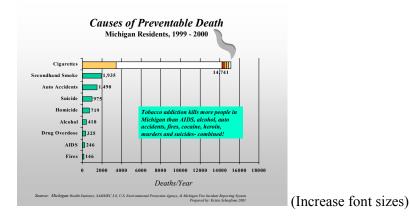
Reproductive toxins:

- Nicotine
- Cadmium
- Carbon monoxide

The EPA classifies SHS as a Group A carcinogen, the same as radon, asbestos and benzene.

Q. Is secondhand smoke really a significant health risk?

■ YES! Passive smoking is the second leading cause of preventable death in Michigan, right behind tobacco use. 1,935 Michigan citizens died in 1999 from breathing secondhand smoke (SHS)².



- YES! SHS kills a minimum of 53,000 nonsmoking Americans each year from cancer and heart disease³.
- YES! Workplace exposure to secondhand smoke causes more disease and death than all other toxins combined⁴.
- YES! Even 30 minutes of SHS exposure dramatically increases the short-term risk of heart attack due to the immediate effect that SHS has on the cardiovascular system of nonsmokers⁵.
- YES! A half-hour of breathing SHS "activates" blood platelets, making them sticky and starting the process of atherosclerosis (blockage of the heart's arteries)⁶.
- YES! Nonsmokers regularly exposed to SHS suffer death rates 30 % higher than that of unexposed nonsmokers^{5,6}.
- YES! The Surgeon General, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety, Occupational Health and Safety Administration, National Academy of Sciences, International Agency for Research on Cancer, and National Toxicology Program all conclude that SHS is a significant health risk.

...tobacco-specific carcinogens are found in the blood and urine of nonsmokers exposed to SHS⁷.

Q. What does secondhand smoke do to health?

• Over the past twenty years, medical science has shown that nonsmokers, when they breathe SHS, suffer many of the same diseases as smokers, including⁸:

Heart Disease Stroke

Lung and other cancers Respiratory Infections

Emphysema Asthma

• In infants, SHS causes:

Low birth weight Poor lung development Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Respiratory Infections

• In children, SHS causes:

Asthma Middle ear infections

Bronchitis Pneumonia

Q. What can be done about secondhand smoke in Kent County?

- A countywide smokefree worksite regulation⁹ would protect workers and the public from SHS. The regulation would:
 - 1. Create smokefree worksites and public places, such as:

Offices Laundromats
Retail stores Hotel lobbies

- 2. Require posting of "Smokefree Area" signs and removal of ashtrays in every building or public place where smoking is prohibited.
- 3. Protect employees, job applicants, and customers from retaliation as a result of reporting violations.

Q. What about compliance? Who will insure that this regulation is followed?

• Smokefree workplace policies enjoy wide public support and high rates of voluntary compliance so they are generally self-enforcing¹⁰.

If there are any complaints:

- In other counties, the Health Officer has responsibility for administering and enforcing this regulation. The County Health Department could handle any complaints in our community.
- A model regulation provides civil penalties for repeated violation of the regulation including a graduated system of fines.

Q. Can ventilation protect workers and the public?

• **NO!** Ventilation and filtration systems are ineffective for protecting public health. Even the manufacturers of these products do NOT claim these systems are able to remove the carcinogens contained in tobacco smoke¹¹.

Q. Is a smokefree worksite regulation good for businesses?

- YES! Smokefree worksites have proven good for businesses and their bottom line.
- In fact, employers can anticipate 12:

Lower insurance expenses (carpets, drapes, upholstery, paintwork).

Lower insurance premiums (fire, medical, workers comp, liability).

Lower labor costs (reduced absenteeism, increased productivity). (Glantz)

- 70% of voters surveyed in Kent County prefer a smokefree worksite policy when seeking employment. (For 26% it would not make difference. Only a very small percentage do not prefer smokefree worksites)¹³. [Note: this information may or may not be available in your county.]
- SHS harms the health and reduces the productivity of nonsmokers, costing employees money. Estimated costs associated with SHS's effects on nonsmokers range from \$56 to \$490 per smoker per year. Smoke-free worksites reduce employer's potential legal liability for SHS exposure. 12, 14

Q. Why shouldn't businesses be able to choose whether or not to allow smoking?

Just as the government inspects and regulates food safety and water purity, it has an
obligation to ensure clean air as well. Health protection is too important to be left to the
discretion of businesses.

The scientific community has long said that secondhand smoke is a significant public health threat and 91% of Kent County voters agree¹³. [Note: Subject to your County information]

Q. Does the public support a smokefree worksite regulation? [Note: Subject to your county information]

- YES! According to a recent survey of Kent County voters, 81% agree that a county regulation is needed to protect children and other nonsmokers from exposure to SHS in worksites and public places.¹³
- YES! A voter survey conducted in November 2002 in Jackson County, Michigan found that 92% of Jackson County residents believed that secondhand smoke was harmful, and 80% believed that county regulation of secondhand smoke was needed to protect the public from the health dangers of secondhand smoke. See http://www.tcsg.org/sfelp/home.htm for details.
- YES! A November 2002 survey of over 400 Marquette residents showed that 66.7 percent of respondents agreed that it is government's responsibility to protect public health, including the restriction of smoking, and 77.4 percent said they believed regulation was needed to protect children, clients and visitors in public places and work sites. See http://www.tcsg.org/sfelp/home.htm for details.
- YES! A survey conducted by Public Policy Associates in November 2001 of Ingham County voters indicated that 96.4% believed second-hand smoke is harmful to people other than the smoker, and 72% felt that government has the obligation to protect the public health. ¹⁵
- YES! Communities across Michigan are acting to ensure smokefree air for their citizens. The City of Marquette, Ingham County and Washtenaw County have passed and implemented smoke-free regulations. Genesee and Marquette Counties are working toward similar measures.

O. If so, why not pass a state law?

- County government is given the mandate to protect public health according to the Michigan Public Health Code (Public Act 368 of 1978).
- Local smokefree worksite regulations have proved to be highly successful and popular.
- The tobacco industry has a history of successfully blocking legislation at the state level.

Q. Where can I get more information?

• Contact [your local coalition contact person]! (tel.000.000.000) or [website]

To review a model smokefree health regulation, go to the Smoke-free Environments Law Project's website at www.tcsg.org/sfelp/home.htm. In the column on the right, click on "Smoke-Free Regulations". Copies of the Ingham, Washtenaw and Marquette City regulations/ordinance are also available on the same website.

[Your coalition/group name] is a coalition of individuals and organizations committed to creating smokefree worksites and public places in [your county name] County.

Our members do not object to smoking by adults. [Coalition name] believes people should not have to breathe an unhealthy and deadly product against their will. After all, smoking is optional; breathing is not.

Sources:

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- 2. Michigan Health Statistics, SAMMEC 3.0, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Michigan Fire Incident Reporting System. 1999-2000.
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- 14. Kristein. "How Much Can Business Expect to Profit from Smoking Cessation?" Preventive Medicine 12 (1983): 358-381. Jackson and Halle. "Smoking: Perspectives 1985." Primary Care 12 (1985): 197-216.
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