

BreatheND

Breaking through: The Email Newsletter 9/21/2009

Fact

For every two hours that a nonsmoking bartender or waitperson spends in a smoky bar, they involuntarily smoke the equivalent of four cigarettes.

Breakthrough News

In North Dakota, Fargo, Minot and Bismarck all have some local safeguards against toxic secondhand smoke, but only Fargo has eliminated smoke from all workplaces including bars and truck stops – thereby protecting patrons and workers from the chemical fallout they were previously subjected to. Now, the Bismarck Tobacco-Free Coalition is working to improve the air quality for workers in the state capital by collecting signatures of support for a comprehensive protection that would make all public places in the city of Bismarck smoke-free. The signatures will help the Coalition gauge public support for extending a smoke-free working environment to all workers and patrons.

At present, most Bismarck workplaces (including restaurant-bar combinations) provide safe, smoke-free environments. But there are several notable exceptions -- including bars, hotel bars, hotel banquet rooms, truck stops, and private clubs. Workers in such areas still need to be protected from secondhand smoke.

If you support this effort, please email Amy Heuer, President of the Bismarck Tobacco Free Coalition at amyheuer@bis.midco.net today!

Bar workers and patrons -- Inspired to Act

This new initiative is citizen led. The Bismarck Tobacco-Free Coalition was contacted by bar workers and patrons who do not feel safe spending time in these smoking establishments. And why should they? The 2006 U.S. Surgeon General's Report on The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Secondhand Smoke has concluded that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, and hospitality worker health improves dramatically with the passage of smoke-free laws.

- Communities with comprehensive smoke-free laws (including bars) have seen their heart-attack rates reduced by 10% - 20%.
- Secondhand smoke exposure can double the risk of breast cancer for women younger than 50 -- and many young women work in smoky bars and clubs.
- Before California bars went smoke-free in 1998, 74% of San Francisco bartenders reported experiencing respiratory symptoms. Within two months of bars going smoke-free, these complaints dropped by almost 60%.
- Historically, food service workers have had a significantly greater risk of dying from lung cancer than the general population, in part, because of secondhand smoke exposure in the workplace.

All workers deserve the right to breathe clean air while they work.

‘Comprehensive smoke-free workplace laws are the best vaccine against heart disease, cancer, and breathing disorders.’

--*Secondhand Smoke and Smoke-free Policy, 2nd ed., 2009, Univ. of KY*