

December 1, 2003

Dear Community Leader:

As you may know, the desire and need to make Champaign-Urbana a smoke free community is growing. Our group, the C-U Smokefree Alliance was established with the need of citizens and businesses in mind.

All citizens and workers, including those employed by the hospitality industry, deserve to breathe clean air. Consider these facts:

- Secondhand smoke is a major cause of heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease and lung cancer.
- Secondhand smoke causes headaches, sinus problems, and is uncontrollable - causing harm to both healthy people and those with breathing problems.
- Smoke free workplaces result in less worker absenteeism due to respiratory ailments, headaches, etc., as well as higher productivity, lower cleaning and maintenance costs.
- The EPA determined that ventilation can remove the odor of secondhand smoke, but can not eliminate the known 5,000 chemicals – including arsenic, cyanide and other toxins.
- The National Cancer Institute determined that secondhand smoke is responsible for the early deaths of 65,000 non-smoking Americans annually.

It is easy to see why Clean Indoor Air laws are sweeping the nation. States that already have strong Clean Indoor Air laws include: California, Florida, New York, Delaware, Maine, and Connecticut, with Massachusetts soon to follow. Across the nation many cities have also adopted Clean Indoor Air laws.

Opponents of clean indoor air claim that going smoke free will hurt industry, or that it is the right of smokers to smoke in the presence of non-smoking citizens. Extensive research from around the world has shown going smoke free to have either no economic impact or a positive economic impact on the hospitality industry- *and*- that the general public, including a high percentage of smokers, supports smoke free public places, restaurants and bars. These studies are professionally conducted and based on objective measures that account for underlying trends and fluctuations. Studies that report a negative economic impact from the adoption of Clean Indoor Air laws are based on predictions and are generally funded by the tobacco industry.

Clean Indoor Air laws work. California has seen a dramatic reduction in cancer rates (12% in men, 8% in women) which has been linked to smoke free workplaces, smoke free restaurants/bars, statewide laws, and other tobacco control programs. California has seen a 27% drop in adult smokers and a 19.5% reduction in lung cancer rates alone. Other tobacco related cancer rates including larynx, mouth, esophagus, bladder, pancreas, kidney, stomach and cervical cancers have also dropped.

The citizens and businesses of Champaign-Urbana can experience the same success. We are asking businesses, individuals, and organizations in the community to sign a resolution in support of a local Clean Indoor Air ordinance to protect everyone in Champaign-Urbana from secondhand smoke. We must take advantage of our unique situation as the only downstate community (one of 19 statewide) that can lawfully pass a Clean Indoor Air law.

Sincerely,

Scott P. Hays, PhD.
President, C-U Smokefree Alliance