



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE February 23, 2010

Lisa Davis, Public Health Initiatives Branch (860) 509-7655

Senate Bill 245 - An Act Concerning Smoking in Public Places

The Department of Public Health supports Senate Bill 245.

The intent of this bill is to prohibit smoking in employers with one or more employees, thereby protecting more Connecticut residents from the exposure to secondhand smoke and its hazards. The U.S. Surgeon General has confirmed that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke and that establishing smoke-free environments is the only evidence-based measure to prevent exposure. Secondhand smoke has been classified as a Group A carcinogen by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and contains hazardous chemical components such as cadmium, benzene and arsenic. Studies have shown that nonsmokers who work in a smoking environment increase their risk of heart disease by 25 to 30 percent and their risk of lung cancer by 20 to 30 percent.¹

In Connecticut, surveys indicate that our residents may also be at risk. For example, the Connecticut Adult Tobacco Survey asked adults in workplaces of more than five employees about the non-compliance with the Clean Indoor Air Act. The results of the survey stated that 8.4% of these adults indicated that they were exposed to smoke in their work area within the past 7 days. Among Connecticut high school students that have a job, 44.3% report that smoking is allowed at least sometimes or in some places where they work. (2009 Connecticut School Health Survey)

Research has shown that secondhand smoke cannot be controlled by ventilation. Similarly, the literature shows that creating separate areas for tobacco use does not eliminate the hazard of secondhand smoke exposure.² Even in buildings with good ventilation, exposure to secondhand smoke has been shown to occur.¹

Smoke-free policies not only work to protect nonsmokers from the death and disease caused by exposure to secondhand smoke, but also have an immediate positive effect on public health. There is strong evidence that these laws result in decreased hospital admissions for heart attacks.³

This bill promotes a policy that makes good public health sense and will result in a savings in health care costs and employee productivity.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

¹ Leslie Zellers & Samantha K. Graff, Tobacco Control Legal Consortium, *Workplace Smoking: Options for Employees and Legal Risks for Employers* (2008). <http://tclconline.org/documents/workplace.pdf>

² Repace, J., Kawachi, I. And Glantz, S., *Fact Sheet on Second Hand Smoke*. Repace Associates, Inc., Secondhand Smoke Consultants. <http://www.repace.com/factappen.html>

³ Pierce, J.P.; Leon, M.E., "Special report: policy - effectiveness of smoke-free policies," *Lancet Oncology* 9: 614-615, July 2008.

Phone:



Telephone Device for the Deaf: (860) 509-7191

410 Capitol Avenue - MS # _____

P.O. Box 340308 Hartford, CT 06134

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