



# South Central District Health

*Keeping your family & community healthy*  
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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **District Health Supports the New Surgeon General's Report on Secondhand Smoke**

South Central District Health said a new U.S. Surgeon General's Report on secondhand smoke leaves no doubt that secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard and shows why Idaho needs to enact a comprehensive smoke-free law that covers all indoor workplaces and public places and protects everyone's right to breathe clean air.

The Surgeon General's report, released today in Washington, DC, shows that there is no longer any scientific debate that secondhand smoke causes serious diseases, including lung cancer, heart disease and respiratory illnesses such as bronchitis and asthma, and that the only way to protect everyone from these health hazards is to completely eliminate exposure. The report makes it clear that other approaches, such as smoking and non-smoking sections and ventilation technology, do not eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke.

This is the most comprehensive scientific report ever produced on the health harms of secondhand smoke and marks the first time the Surgeon General has issued a report on secondhand smoke since 1986. Materials on the Surgeon General's report can be found at [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/).

Idaho statistics show that 61,000 children are exposed to secondhand smoke at home, and between 140 to 260 adults, children, and babies died each year in the state from secondhand smoke and pregnancy smoking.

Health advocates said the Surgeon General's report shows why Idaho should approve a comprehensive smoke-free law that includes bowling alleys and stand-alone bars.

"The Surgeon General's report is the most highly respected scientific authority on smoking and health, and this report's conclusion is crystal clear: There is no question that

secondhand smoke causes serious disease and death,” said Tami Pearson, Tobacco Cessation Program Coordinator for South Central District Health. “Leaders in Idaho have done the right thing by approving a smoke-free workplace law that protects workers and customers from secondhand smoke. There is simply no reason that anyone should have to breathe the toxins in secondhand smoke to earn a paycheck or as a consequence of patronizing a restaurant, bar, or other venue. Now that the Surgeon General has confirmed how harmful secondhand smoke really is, it’s critical that our leaders resist any efforts to weaken the smoke-free law and continue to protect our right to breathe clean air.”

To help people kick the tobacco habit, South Central District Health, along with Magic Valley Regional Medical Center, is offering the American Cancer Society’s “Fresh Start” program. Two class times are being offered for the convenience of participants. These free six-week classes will begin on Tuesday, July 11, at 5:30 p.m. and continue every Tuesday until August 15 in the Sunflower Room in the MVRMC Education Building, 588 Addison Ave. West, across from the main MVRMC facility. The second class will begin Thursday, July 27, at 12:00 noon and continue every Thursday until August 31. Participants may register by calling Tami Pearson, South Central District Health Tobacco Program Coordinator, at 737-5945.

The new Surgeon General’s report summarizes the scientific evidence that has led every major public health organization and scientific authority to conclude that secondhand smoke is not just an annoyance, but a serious health hazard. The report affirms the broad scientific consensus that 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. Secondhand smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, including more than 60 known carcinogens and over 400 additional poisons.

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). Three other states – Idaho, Florida, and Louisiana – have smoke-free laws that exempt stand-alone bars. Idaho’s law also exempts bowling alleys. 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).

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