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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
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One Year Later: Michigan's Smoke Free Law Helps Reduce Exposure to Secondhand Smoke

Lansing- A Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) bar employees study and MDCH air monitoring shows that the Smoke Free Law has successfully reduced the public's and employee's exposure to secondhand smoke. The study, conducted four to six weeks before and six to ten weeks after the smoke-free law, shows how the level of secondhand smoke exposure decreased significantly among bar employees after the law went into effect.

"The law was passed to protect Michigan residents, employees, and visitors from the dangerous health effects secondhand smoke and our studies show that the law is doing its job," said Dr. Greg Holzman, State Chief Medical Executive. "The Surgeon General's Report released in December warned that even short-term exposure to secondhand smoke can have serious health implications for those who suffer from heart disease and respiratory conditions."

Forty bar employees from 13 counties throughout the state participated in the study. Researchers measured the participants' levels of cotinine and NNAL - chemicals found in urine that indicates a person's level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Each participant also completed a respiratory and general health questionnaire.

The results demonstrate a significant decrease in cotinine levels among employees working in the same bars from an average of 35.92 nanograms per milliliters before the law to zero nanograms per milliliters after the smoke-free law went into effect. There also was a significant decrease in NNAL levels among participants working in the same bar from an average of .086 picomoles per milliliter before the law to .034 picomoles per milliliter after the smoke-free law was implemented. Bar employees also reported improvement in reported general health status and respiratory health, including wheezing, allergy symptoms, and coughing, after the law took effect.

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Results of air monitoring studies were also conducted before and after the smoke-free law in the state's six major regions including the Southeast, West, Upper Peninsula, Northern Lower Peninsula, Thumb, and Central. Prior to passage of the law, air quality was tested in a sample of restaurants throughout Michigan where smoking was allowed. After the law passed, the air quality was re-checked in those same establishments to determine if levels of matter found in secondhand smoke had decreased. Preliminary results of the air monitoring studies demonstrate a significant decrease in exposure to secondhand smoke in restaurants of all participating areas to date.

“We now have results from two studies that clearly show that the law is working and doing as it was intended to do and that is protect restaurant employees and patrons from exposure to secondhand smoke,” Holzman said.

MDCH is currently collecting data from local health departments to report the number of complaints that have been filed and resolved since passage of the law. That information is expected to be available in May. To view the nicotine level and air monitoring studies, please log onto www.michigan.gov/smokefreelaw and scroll to *Evaluation Study Results*. For more information, please call MDCH researchers Teri Wilson, (517) 335-9124 (office) or (248) 231-2007 (cell); or Farid Shamo (517) 335-8021 (office) or (586) 873-0100 (cell).

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