

What YOU can do

- Find out your state's current legislation and find articles on your state's movement:
<http://www.tobacco.org>
- Sign up on the Smokefree Action Network for action alerts, sample letters to your governor and a directory of coalitions in your area:
<http://www.smokefree.net/>
- Join a local Coalition through the SmokeLess States National Tobacco Policy Initiative:
<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/5892.html>
- Mobilize your student body to send letters to your local politicians. Tell your representatives about your concerns and urge them to support legislation outlawing smoking in workplaces.
- Contact Health Organizations working on smoke-free workplace rights:

American Lung Association

<http://www.lungusa.org/local/index.html>

American Cancer Society

http://www.cancer.org/docroot/GI/gi_3_1.asp

- For more ideas:

<http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/9594.html>

AMA MSS-CSI Members:

Daniel Leung (Chair)
Wake Forest University School of Medicine

Christopher Barker
University of Florida College of Medicine

Nicole Demers
University of Florida College of Medicine

David Kim
Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons

Claudia Lee
University of Health Sciences College of Osteopathic Medicine

Chirag Patel
University of Texas Medical School at Houston

Jason Sharp
University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center

Despina Siolas
State University of New York - Stony Brook

Julia Tzu
Johns Hopkins School of Medicine



American Medical Association Medical Student Section (AMA-MSS)

Tobacco-Free Work Places



Information Pamphlet

Prepared by the
Medical Student Section
Committee on Scientific Issues
(CSI)

Why should workplaces be smoke-free?

Smoking harms the health of smokers and those around them. Smokers are at far higher risks of strokes, heart attacks and other cardiovascular diseases; cancers of the lungs, mouth, larynx, bladder, pancreas, kidneys and stomach; emphysema, bronchitis, and tuberculosis. These diseases cause serious illness, disability and premature death. Tobacco causes nearly 5 million deaths worldwide each year, more than all illegal drugs combined.

Tobacco smoke also harms non-smokers exposed to so-called second-hand smoke or environmental tobacco smoke (ETS). In addition to smell and irritation to eyes, ETS exposure increases the risk of lung cancer and cardio-vascular and respiratory diseases. In the USA alone, each year ETS kills an estimated 35,000 to 65,000 adult non-smokers from heart disease and 3,000 non-smokers from lung cancer. This is a small fraction of global deaths from ETS.

ETS exposure is common in workplaces. In 1996, an estimated 130 million adult non-smokers in China were exposed to workplace ETS. In the UK in 1999, more than 3 million non-smokers were continuously or frequently exposed to tobacco smoke at work. In France, where there are laws restricting smoking in public spaces, 40% of employees are still exposed to ETS. ETS can interact with chemicals and radiation in workplaces to produce an additive or multiplicative effect and increase significantly the risk of many occupational diseases. In some countries, employers have a legal responsibility to protect the health of their employees. Smoke-free workplaces can reduce employers' legal liability, create safer working environments, improve workers' health and enhance corporate image.

Current Legislation

As of August 2003, eight U.S. states (California, Delaware, New York, Connecticut, Maine, Florida, Utah and Vermont) have passed smoke-free legislation, as well as more than 1,600 municipalities and four nations (Norway, Ireland, Philippines and Australia). In addition, several states and hundreds of cities as well as several countries are debating smoke-free workplace legislation. (<http://www.wisinfo.com/journal/spjopinio/n/281508915260969.shtml>)

The SmokeLess States National Tobacco Initiative

Founded in 1993, the SmokeLess States program has been one of the largest and most visible philanthropic efforts to reduce tobacco use. The Initiative is a collaborative effort among the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the American Medical Association and statewide coalitions receiving grants that support activities to improve the tobacco policy environment.

Policy efforts focus on three areas:

- Promoting ordinances to reduce public exposure to environmental tobacco smoke, including smoke-free work and public places
- Increasing state tobacco excise taxes to reduce the demand for tobacco products
- Fostering changes in Medicaid and state employee health insurance coverage and encouraging private health insurers to cover tobacco dependence treatment

For more information visit:
www.smokelessstates.org

Current AMA policy & efforts

The AMA seeks to establish a smoke free society by:

- Supporting educational efforts at all grade levels to help youth avoid the use of tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco.
- Encouraging school authorities to prohibit the use of tobacco by anyone, including students, faculty, and coaches, at school or any school-related activity.
- Encouraging appropriate intervention programs including smoking cessation, opposing the use of models, celebrities, and distinctive hallmarks of well-known organization and celebrities in marketing their products.
- Eliminating cigarette, pipe, and cigar smoking in any indoor area where children live or play, or where another person's health could be adversely affected due to passive smoking, and
- Supporting legislation prohibiting smoking, increasing tobacco taxes, and other avenues to reduce the tobacco-using population.

Our AMA encourages the legislative enactment of significantly increased taxes on tobacco to discourage smoking and to make such funds available for those afflicted by tobacco-caused illness. AMA policy also advocates comprehensive legislation to prevent tobacco companies from targeting children with their strategic marketing programs. The AMA encourages government agencies to exercise regulatory authority to prohibit advertising that falsely promotes the alleged benefits and pleasures of smoking as well worth the risks to health and life. Our AMA supports legislation requiring labeling of cigarettes with a warning such as "Warning: Cigarette Smoking causes CANCER OF THE MOUTH, LARYNX, AND LUNG, is a major cause of HEART DISEASE AND EMPHYSEMA, is ADDICTIVE, and may result in DEATH. Infants and children living with smokers have an increased risk of respiratory infections and cancer."