



## NC's Smoke-Free Restaurants and Bars Law is Saving Lives Why Mess with a Success?

### North Carolina's Smoke-Free Restaurants and Bars Law Works.

**It is popular, effective and being followed by the vast majority of affected businesses.**

#### Strong Business and Public Support of the Smoke-Free Restaurants and Bars Law:

- A new poll released April 2011 by Public Opinion Strategies found that **74 percent of North Carolina voters support the state's one and a half year old smoke-free law**. The poll found support for the smoke-free law cut across party lines, including 78 percent of Democrats, 68 percent of Republicans and 71 percent of Independent voters. Among those who have a favorable view of the tea party, 61 percent support keeping the current law.
- **The N.C. Restaurant and Lodging Association reports that this law has had an overall positive effect on restaurants and hotels in North Carolina, and has been very well received by the public.** In addition, a March 2011 study conducted by an independent contractor, entitled "Evaluation of the Impact of Non-Smoking Legislation on Gross Collections of NC bars and Restaurants: Comparison of Pre and Post- Implementation of Legislation--An Update One-Year Post-Implementation," found that **bars and restaurants in NC have seen an increase in business since the implementation of the law, both grossly and in comparison to other retail industries.**
- There is a **high level of compliance and few reported complaints of potential violations**. There are more than 24,000 restaurants and bars subject to the law. According to the Department of Public Health (DPH), over the past eight months, the state has received an average of less than 50 complaints per month about businesses that may be non-compliant with the law.

#### Health Benefits of the Law are Clear: The Law is Effective in Eliminating a Serious Health Risk to which There is NO SAFE LEVEL of Exposure.

- There have been significant positive changes in air quality since the law's implementation: According to study results released by the N.C. Division of Public Health in April 2010, **the law resulted in an 89 percent improvement in air quality inside restaurants and bars.**
- Data from the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) show that **the current smoke-free restaurants and bars law contributed to a 42 percent reduction in workers exposed to secondhand smoke in the workplace**, declining from 14.6% in 2008 to 8.4% in the first three quarters of 2010.

#### The Law is Saving Health Care Costs:

- March 2011, the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) released a benefit-cost analysis (BCA) for HWTF programs. Based on the benefit-cost computation, it is estimated that **eliminating smoking in North Carolina's restaurants and bars will save nearly \$4.7 million per year in avoidable medical care costs for hospitality workers.**<sup>i</sup>

**Keep NC's Smoke-Free Law STRONG!**

April 2011

For more information, go to [www.NCAllianceforHealth.org](http://www.NCAllianceforHealth.org) or contact [ncalliance@heart.org](mailto:ncalliance@heart.org)

<sup>i</sup> The report was conducted by *Chenoweth and Associates, Inc.*, an independent evaluator specializing in health econometrics. In the report, Chenoweth and Associates documented the calculations for the benefit-cost for the NC Smoke-free Restaurants and Bars law. *Note: This Benefit Cost Analysis was included solely for informational purposes and are not attributed to HWTF's tobacco cessation efforts. The report can be viewed at <http://www.healthwellinc.com/PageCopyUploads/Documents/HWTF-CostBenefitAnalyses.pdf>; pg 45.*