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American Heart Association**

Testimony in support of H.217, restrictions on smoking

The National Adult Tobacco Survey found that 17.9% of adults in Vermont reported exposure to secondhand smoke in indoor or outdoor areas at work and 23.6% said they were exposed to SHS in public places.

The American Heart Association and the Coalition for a Tobacco Free Vermont support H.217 as it further reduces the dangers of secondhand smoke in public places and workplaces.

Health concerns over secondhand smoke are real.

- There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Smoke-free restrictions in workplaces and public places saves lives and prevents serious illness while saving Vermont money.

This legislation would protect workers and guests from SHS in Vermont hotels as well as those exposed to SHS as they enter and exit public buildings and workplaces.

We support H.217 because reducing secondhand smoke reduces heart disease, stroke, lung disease and cancer:

The new Surgeon General's report on smoking points to something that never occurred to Americans back in the 1960s – just being in the same room with a smoker can cause you irreparable harm.

Two and half million of the 20 million who died of smoking since the first Surgeon General's first report were non-smokers exposed to secondhand smoke. 263,000 of these were from lung cancer caused by secondhand smoke. Breathing in secondhand smoke increases your chance of lung cancer between 20-30%.

The report also noted for the first time that secondhand smoke exposure is now known to cause strokes in nonsmokers. Ongoing exposure, according to the report, can increase your risk of stroke by 20 to 30 percent. But smoke-free policies can result in a reduction of coronary events in people younger than 65.

More than 87% of all lung cancer deaths are caused by smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke. Even brief secondhand smoke exposure can damage cells in ways that set the cancer process in motion.

Just 30 minutes of exposure to secondhand smoke changes blood chemistry and increases the risk of heart disease in non-smokers.

Smoke-free policies help smokers cut down or quit smoking. 10-20% of smokers quit smoking as a result of smoke-free legislation in their workplace. Passing smoke-free legislation would help to reduce the state's burden associated with smoker's health care costs.

Cost of Secondhand Smoke?

The S.G report found annual smoking-attributable economic costs in the United States were between \$289–332.5 billion, including \$5.6 billion (in 2006) for lost productivity due to exposure to secondhand smoke

Everyone deserves the right to breathe smoke free air. The purpose of passing a smoke-free law is to fully protect employees, residents and visitors from dangerous exposure to secondhand smoke.

Establishing smoke-free workplaces is the only effective way to ensure that secondhand smoke exposure does not occur in the workplace, because ventilation and other air cleaning technologies cannot completely control for exposure of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke.

Smoke-free laws save lives and money. Hospitalizations for heart attacks for Pueblo, Colorado city residents dropped 41% as a result of the city's smoke-free municipal ordinance.

Massachusetts had a 30% decrease in heart attack deaths when legislators banned smoking in restaurants, bars and other workplaces.

Helena, Montana had a 40% reduction in heart attacks in the first 6 months that its smokefree ordinance was in effect.

At a time when Vermont is keenly interested in reducing health care spending, this legislation would help prevent some of the most expensive health care costs – heart attacks, stroke and cancer.