

**Testimony in Support of H.B. #682
Pennsylvania House of Representatives Health
Committee
June 15, 2015**

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Good Morning Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

My name is Clarke Woods. I am a respiratory therapist and the Chair-elect for the American Lung Association in South Central PA Local Leadership Board.

When the Clean Indoor Air Act was passed in 2008, Pennsylvania's law left way too many residents and visitors vulnerable to secondhand smoke exposure. There are too many loopholes, including some restaurants, bars, casinos, private clubs, etc. As a health care provider, I am here to tell you this is unacceptable. I am fortunate that I get to work in a smoke free environment every day, but every day, I also see the devastating effects that tobacco use and second hand smoke exposure can have on a mother, father, sister, brother and other loved ones. I do not wish such disease on my worst enemy. I ask you to consider this as you discuss the release of H.B. #682. Pennsylvania's Clean Indoor Air Act needs to be comprehensive.

Secondhand smoke is a leading cause of preventable death killing more than 53,000 nonsmokers nationwide each year, including more than 3,000 Pennsylvanians. Secondhand smoke is the combination of "mainstream smoke" (the smoke exhaled by a smoker) and side-stream smoke (from the burning end of the cigarette). Secondhand smoke is also referred to as environmental tobacco smoke, passive smoke, or involuntary tobacco smoke. It is a complex mixture of more than 7,000 chemicals that are produced by the burning materials of a cigarette; hundreds of these chemicals are toxic, and about 70 are known to cause cancer.¹

In 1964, the Surgeon General first documented the harmful effects of smoking in *Smoking and Health: Report of the Advisory Committee of the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service*, which summarized the state of the science knowledge regarding tobacco use at that time.² Research conducted since then has firmly established that smoking, other forms of tobacco consumption and exposure to second hand smoke cause an

enormous amount of health problems and related death and suffering. In 1993, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classified secondhand smoke as a Group A carcinogen meaning it definitely causes cancer in humans.³ Most recently, the 2014 Surgeon General's Report, stated that cigarette smoking today is even more dangerous than previously thought. Cigarette smoking has been linked to disease of nearly all organs of the body, to diminished health status, and to harm to the fetus.⁴

Lifetime nonsmokers who live with a smoker have a 20 to 30 percent increase in the risk of lung cancer from secondhand smoke exposure, and risk is greatest among those exposed to the heaviest smokers for the longest time.⁵ Exposure to secondhand smoke also increases a person's risk of stroke by 20 to 30 percent.⁶

A February 2015 report released by the CDC found nonsmokers' exposure to secondhand smoke was reduced by half between 1999-2012, yet 1 in 4 nonsmokers remain exposed.⁷

In 2007, a study using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) technology was able to detect damage in the lungs of nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke. ⁸

The 2010 U.S. Surgeon General's Report, *How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease*, confirms that even occasional exposure to secondhand smoke is harmful, and that low levels of exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke lead to a rapid and sharp increase in dysfunction and inflammation of the lining of the blood vessels, which are implicated in heart attacks and stroke. ⁹

The 2006 Surgeon General's Report on *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke* concluded that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke and that establishing smokefree environments is the only proven way to prevent exposure. The report also finds that many millions of Americans are still exposed to secondhand smoke despite substantial progress in tobacco control. ¹⁰

As the body of scientific evidence becomes larger and more precise, it is now possible to prove that smokefree policies not only work to protect nonsmokers from the death and disease caused by exposure to secondhand smoke, but also have an immediate effect on the public's health.

On a larger scale, a study has confirmed that restaurants and bars located in smokefree cities have 82% less indoor air pollution than restaurants and bars in cities that do not have comprehensive smokefree protection. Because of the mountain of evidence from these peer-reviewed, scientific studies, the Centers for Disease Control recently issued a warning for anyone at risk for heart disease to avoid smoke-filled indoor environments completely.

Secondhand smoke kills. Knowing the science behind it, as well as how smokefree policies protect the public from secondhand smoke, will help cement this in the minds of the public.

I urge you to support H. B. #682, as it is written. Pennsylvania residents need and deserve a comprehensive Clean Indoor Air Act that protects them from second hand smoke.

Thank you.

1 HHS, The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2014, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/>. See also, HHS, The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2006, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44324/>.

2Available at <http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/NN/B/C/X/B/>.

3 National Toxicology Program, Public Health Service, Ninth Report on Carcinogens, 2000, <http://ehis.niehs.nih.gov/roc/toc9.html#toc>; Robertson, GD, "Panel Says Secondhand Smoke, Alcohol Should Be Considered Carcinogens," Associated Press, December 3, 1998.

4 HHS, The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2014, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/>.

5 HHS, The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2006, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK44324/>. See also, CDC, Consumer Summary: Secondhand Smoke: What It Means to You, 2006, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/secondhand-smoke-consumer.pdf>.

6 HHS, The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2014, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/>.

7 http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6404a7.htm?s_cid=mm6404a7_w

8 <http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/11/26/us-smoking-lungs-idUSN2643239720071126>

9 http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/2010/index.htm

10 http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/2006/index.htm