



# Secondhand Smoke and Casinos

Casino workers deserve the same health protections

**Secondhand smoke has become an occupational hazard for many workers, including casino workers, from dealers to waitresses to security. Job-related exposure to secondhand smoke is a significant, but entirely preventable, cause of premature death among U.S. workers.**<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

**ACS CAN urges policymakers and community leaders to support laws that make all gaming facilities smoke-free.**

**Secondhand smoke exposure levels in casinos can be up to 28.5 times higher than in offices and up to 11.7 times higher than restaurants.**<sup>31</sup>

## Workers' Health is at Risk

- Casino workers are at higher risk for secondhand smoke related illness.
- The National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH) found occupational exposure to secondhand smoke increased workers' risk of lung cancer and other diseases.
- Nicotine concentrations in casinos, bars, billiard halls, bowling alleys, and bingo parlors were found to be 2.4 to 18.5 times higher than in offices or residences, and 1.5 to 11.7 times higher than in restaurants.<sup>4</sup>
- Even in ventilated casinos, workers have nicotine levels 300 to 600 percent higher than those in other smoking workplaces.<sup>5</sup>
- Secondhand smoke is found throughout the entire gaming area, suggesting that casino patrons as well as other casino employees (e.g. waitresses, cashiers, security personnel) incurred the same levels of exposure to secondhand smoke demonstrated by the dealers and supervisors.<sup>6</sup>
- For example, a study in a Nevada casino reported that smoke-related pollutants were found in all areas of the facility at levels above what EPA considers safe.<sup>7</sup> The study confirmed that "[secondhand smoke] drifts in the air currents to adjacent areas, affecting employees and patrons who may consider themselves safe from SHS exposure."<sup>8</sup>

## Smoke-free Policies Improve Workers' Health

- NIOSH recommends ALL workers be protected from involuntary exposure to secondhand smoke.<sup>9</sup>
- Implementing smoke-free policies has immediate benefits on restaurant and bar workers' health. Hospitality workers experienced an 89 percent decline in secondhand smoke exposure just five months after New York state passed its Clean Indoor Air Act.<sup>10</sup>
- A 2008 study of Minnesota hospitality workers showed that after implementation of a smoke-free law, levels of a secondhand smoke indicator decreased by over 80 percent.<sup>11</sup>
- More importantly, smoke-free policies may reduce workers' long-term risk of lung cancer and cardiovascular disease.<sup>12, 13, 14, 15, 16</sup>

## Smoke-Free Policies Improve the Bottom Line

- Studies on the impact of smoke-free laws on gaming facilities in Delaware and Kentucky show that they have no effect on total gaming revenue.<sup>17, 18</sup>
- A study in Massachusetts found that 100% smoke-free ordinances did not negatively affect profits from bingo and other gambling sponsored by charitable organizations.<sup>19</sup>
- By allowing smoking in the workplace, business owners increase their costs of doing business. Employers pay increased health, life, and fire insurance premiums, make higher workers' compensation payments, incur higher worker absenteeism, and settle for lower worker productivity.<sup>20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27</sup>

- Reducing smoking reduces employer and employee medical care costs - employers bear a large share of the health care costs for tobacco users through employer-provided health insurance.
- Employees who smoke have significantly higher absentee, injury, accident, and disciplinary rates than their nonsmoking colleagues.<sup>28, 29, 30, 31</sup>
- If most businesses nationwide implemented smoking restrictions, the savings in operating and maintenance costs would total between \$4 billion and \$8 billion a year.<sup>32</sup>

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