



Date: July 24, 2008

General questions: Patrick O'Neill, DHS 971-673-1282

Technical questions: Cathryn Cushing, 971-673-1013

Two-thirds of Oregon liquor establishments are smokefree

PORTLAND, Ore.—As Oregon approaches the start of the expanded Smokefree Workplace Law, a new survey finds that two-thirds of bars and bar sections of restaurants are already smokefree.

The law will prohibit smoking in bars, bingo halls and bowling centers starting Jan. 1, 2009.

The survey found that 91 percent of establishments that allow smoking are aware of the upcoming law and nine percent plan to voluntarily go smokefree early before it takes effect.

"This is a very positive sign for implementation and enforcement of Oregon's Smokefree Workplace Law," said Karen Girard, manager of the Tobacco Prevention and Education Program (TPEP), part of the Oregon Department of Human Services State Public Health Division. "The law was created to protect workers from the health hazards of secondhand smoke. A significant number of bar owners agree and are already clearing the air to benefit their employees and satisfy the 90 percent of Oregonians who prefer smokefree places."

The survey, commissioned by TPEP, looked at establishments with an Oregon Liquor Control Commission (OLCC) license. Most can allow smoking with an OLCC Minors Posting, which prohibits minors on the property or allows them only during certain times. Of these license holders that can allow smoking, nearly half are already voluntarily smokefree.

Survey results are being shared with tobacco prevention coordinators in all Oregon counties so they can contact local bar owners with information about the law, assistance with going smokefree and cessation resources for smokers – both employees and customers -- who want to quit.

TPEP is also supporting the law with a campaign to encourage businesses to go smokefree early, to motivate consumers to rediscover smokefree establishments, and to help Oregonians quit through the free QuitLine (1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-877-2NO-FUME).

The survey was conducted in April and May, 2008. All establishments licensed by the OLCC for full and limited on-premises commercial sales, and full on-premises sales for private clubs were contacted by phone.

About the Law

The Oregon Legislature passed a law in June 2007 expanding Oregon's 2001 Smokefree Workplace Law to protect almost all of Oregon workers from secondhand smoke exposure. Beginning Jan. 1, 2009, the number of indoor workplaces required to be smokefree will expand to include bars, bingo halls, bowling centers, employee breakrooms and at least 75 percent of hotel and motel sleeping rooms. The new law will also prohibit smoking within at least 10 feet of all building entrances, exits, windows that open, and ventilation intakes of workplaces or public places. For more information, visit <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/smokefree/index.shtml>.

About TPEP

TPEP is a nationally recognized, comprehensive tobacco control program working in partnership with local health departments, tribes, schools and community organizations. Program activities are based on evidence-based strategies to reduce and prevent tobacco use. For more information, visit <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/tobacco/>.