

**Arkansas**

**Passing the Clean Indoor Air Act Reduces Exposure to Secondhand Smoke**

**Producing Results**

Information obtained from BRFSS data contributed to the April 2006 enactment of the Arkansas Clean Indoor Air Act, which prohibits smoking in all public places, including bars and restaurants, and in nearly all public and private workplaces. The Act thereby protects workers from secondhand smoke and also ensures that children, senior citizens, and the general public can breathe smoke-free air in the public places they visit.

**Public Health Problem**

Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or at work increase their risk for heart disease by 25–30% and their risk for developing lung cancer risk by 20–30%. There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke; even brief exposure can be dangerous.

**Taking Action**

According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Arkansas adult current smoking prevalence in 2005 was 23.5%, compared to 20.5% nationwide. Arkansas-specific BRFSS data also showed that public support for smoke-free bans in public places, work areas, businesses and restaurants has been increasing, with 76.9% supporting such a ban in 2005.

Arkansas lawmakers passed the Arkansas Clean Indoor Air Act in April 2006, which prohibits smoking in all public and work places, including bars and restaurants. The Clean Indoor Air Act protects workers in nearly all public and private workplaces from secondhand smoke. It also ensures that children, senior citizens, and the general public can breathe smoke-free air in the public places they visit. Arkansas is the seventeenth state in the nation to pass a smoke-free workplace act.

**Implications and Impact**

According to the recent Surgeon General’s report, “The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke,” there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Eliminating smoking in indoor spaces fully protects nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke. Furthermore, workplace smoking restrictions lead to less smoking among covered workers. The Arkansas Clean Indoor Act, supported by BRFSS data, ensures that many more citizens in Arkansas will lead safer, healthier lives.