

Highlights in Tobacco Control

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Share Air ads educate about secondhand smoke



Share Air ads will air in statewide markets this spring. An outdoor ad is shown above.

We all have the right to breathe clean air. That's the message behind Share Air, a new public awareness campaign sponsored by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to educate the public about the risks of secondhand smoke exposure.

The campaign includes advertisements and a Web site to provide facts about the health hazards secondhand smoke creates for people of all ages, as well as workers who are exposed to it. The ads are designed to build awareness that clean air is a reasonable expectation at work, at home, and in the community, and individuals are not alone in their desire to share the air and not the smoke.

The campaign includes television, radio, print, outdoor and theater ads. Information is already available on a new Web site at www.ShareAir.org. Television and radio ads are scheduled to air in statewide markets from April through June.

SHS declared toxic

The California Air Resources Board recently identified secondhand smoke (SHS) as a toxic air contaminant. This finding formally identifies SHS as an airborne toxic substance that may cause and/or contribute to death or serious illness and places SHS in the same category as diesel exhaust, arsenic and benzene. The board's action was based on a comprehensive report on exposure and health effects of SHS.

The evaluation established links between exposure to SHS and a number of health problems, including premature births, low birth-weight babies, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, respiratory illnesses and increased incidences of breast cancer in non-smoking, pre-menopausal women.

California is the first state to declare SHS a toxic air contaminant.

More information is available at www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/ets/ets.htm.

Dear Dr. Phil (Huang),

What do we know about Texans' attitudes about secondhand smoke?

Our most recent data regarding adult Texans' attitudes toward secondhand smoke (SHS) comes from the 2004 Texas Behavioral Risk Factor Survey:

Perception of harm: The survey showed that 67 percent of adult Texans believe breathing secondhand smoke is "very harmful to one's health," and an additional 25 percent believe it is "somewhat harmful to one's health." This is very good to see because first and foremost, this issue is about public health.

Worksite policies that restrict smoking: In 2004, only 54 percent of respondents said their place of work has an official policy restricting smoking. Respondents also reported being around secondhand smoke at work an average of 8.65 hours per week. Obviously, considerable work still needs to be done to reduce Texans' exposure to SHS.

Smoking bans in public places: When asked how prohibiting smoking areas in public places would affect their use of public places, 44 percent said they would use public places more often, 13 percent said they would use public places less often, and 39 percent said it would not change their use of public places. This data is very consistent with what we see after passage of strong smoke-free policies – people don't stop going out, and there is no loss in revenue.

Protecting employees from SHS: When asked how important it is to protect employees who work in public places – including restaurants, bars, bingo halls and bowling alleys – from the harmful effects of SHS, 68 percent said it is "very important" and 22 percent said "moderately important." This suggests that the general public supports strong smoke-free policies.

Twelve entire states have passed 100 percent smoke-free ordinances that include restaurants, bars, and clubs. Currently, El Paso and Austin are the only Texas cities that meet that standard. Our most recent Texas data show there is strong concern about exposure to SHS and strong support for protecting the public from it.



The Share Air public awareness campaign includes print ads, such as the one shown above.

Sharing Share Air

The new Share Air secondhand smoke campaign can be a valuable resource for your community partners. Here's how you can spread the word:

- Visit www.ShareAir.org and print bumper stickers, car signs, home signs, door hangers, pledge forms and tip sheets to hand out at presentations, meetings and other activities.
- Print copies of the fact sheet included in this newsletter and distribute it along with a Share Air bumper sticker to key partners, such as educators, health care professionals or community leaders.
- On your e-mail signature, add the following line: "Want to breathe easier? Find out how at www.ShareAir.org."
- Display the Share Air logo on your Web site and provide a link.

Contact Darah Waldrip at 512/458-7111 ext. 3294 or darah.waldrip@dshs.state.tx.us for more information.



Share the air, not the smoke.

Fact: *Secondhand smoke is more than just a nuisance.*

- The 4,000 chemicals in secondhand smoke are more than just annoying; at least 69 of them are known to cause cancer. Some of the chemicals are arsenic, formaldehyde and carbon monoxide.
- Secondhand smoke doesn't go away easily. Using a ceiling fan, opening a window, or even sitting in a non-smoking section doesn't protect you from secondhand smoke. Even if you can't smell it, the chemicals are still in the air.

You are not alone.

Fact: *Secondhand smoke hurts the young, the old and everyone in between.*

- Secondhand smoke is known to cause lung cancer, emphysema and heart disease.
- Children can develop asthma and pneumonia from exposure to secondhand smoke.

Don't let secondhand smoke infringe on your rights or the rights of others.

Fact: *Workers have the right to breathe smoke-free air, too.*

- Constant exposure to secondhand smoke greatly increases an employee's risk of lung cancer, heart disease and emphysema.
- Just 30 minutes' exposure to secondhand smoke can constrict arteries and damage the body's ability to supply blood to the heart.
- Smoke-free workplaces promote healthier employees and greater productivity. Tobacco-related diseases are a major drain on the economy.

For more information, visit www.shareair.org.