



Talking Points: Smoke-Free Alabama

- The Environmental Protection Agency and others have conducted numerous studies that show that indoor air can be two to five times more polluted than the air outdoors, and under some circumstances, can be as much as a hundred to 1,000 times more polluted. Because Americans spend up to 90 percent of their time indoors, it is important to reduce health risks for us all... and especially for children.
- Children are especially vulnerable to secondhand smoke and other environmental pollutants. Children are growing and, per pound of weight, drinking more water, eating more food, and breathing more air than adults. Because of this, they may be at higher risk from environmental dangers.
- A study published in the American Academy of Pediatrics journal, *Pediatrics*, shows that each year, secondhand smoke exposure is linked to up to 2 million ear infections in children, nearly 530,000 doctor visits for asthma, up to 436,000 episodes of bronchitis in children under five years of age, and up to 190,000 cases of pneumonia in children under five years of age.
- The evidence is clear that smoke-free laws protect health without harming business. As the Surgeon General stated: “Evidence from peer-reviewed studies shows that smoke-free policies and regulations do not have an adverse impact on the hospitality industry.” Dozens of studies and hard economic data have shown that smoke-free laws do not harm sales or employment in restaurants and bars, and may have a positive impact. A 2004 report found that in the year after New York City’s smoke-free law took effect, business receipts for restaurants and bars increased, employment rose, the number of liquor licenses increased, virtually all establishments were complying with the law, and the vast majority of New Yorkers supported the law.
- We urge passage of a comprehensive smoke-free bill (HB 149) that would prohibit smoking in all public places in Alabama, including restaurants. The Alabama Chapter-AAP is a member of the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Alabama, which endorses comprehensive legislation. As of the end of the 2010 state legislative sessions, 24 states in the union had passed such comprehensive bars (including restaurants and bars), and many states are contemplating such legislation this year. Let’s not let Alabama be last!