

# SMOKEFREE WORKPLACES WORK IN OREGON

*"No one should be required to breathe unhealthy air as a condition of employment. Yet for the 35,000 Oregonians who work in places where indoor smoking is allowed, inhaling toxic fumes is an unavoidable part of the job."*

— Susan Allan, M.D., J.D., M.P.H.

*Oregon Department of Human Services, Public Health Director*

In May of 2006, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a report on The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke. In the report, both Surgeon General Carmona and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, Michael Leavitt remind the American public about the dangers of secondhand smoke and call for a renewed effort to control this serious health hazard.

*"Despite the great progress that has been made, involuntary exposure to secondhand smoke remains a serious health hazard that can be prevented by making homes, workplaces and public places completely smokefree."*

— Michael O. Leavitt,

*U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services*

## **Oregon has reduced secondhand smoke exposure:**

- Over 83% of households say that no one is allowed to smoke anywhere in their home.
- Over 95% of employees are protected from secondhand smoke exposure at work by the Oregon Indoor Clean Air Act.



However, over 35,000 Oregon workers are still exposed to secondhand smoke at work because they work in bar areas of restaurants or taverns. These areas are currently exempt from Oregon's Indoor Clean Air Act. These employees, who suffer exposure to secondhand smoke as a function of their jobs, are often exposed to extreme levels of secondhand smoke. A study conducted in Oregon found that, on average, the level of particulate matter in the air in bars that allow smoking was 7 times higher than non-smoking bars. Moreover, in many situations bar workers were exposed to levels of particulate matter that were many times the level of exposure deemed safe by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard and no one should be required to be exposed to it in order to keep their job. Most workers in Oregon are protected by law. ALL workers in 17 states, including Washington State and California, are protected by law. ALL workers in Oregon deserve a smokefree workplace. It is time for Oregon to require all workplaces and public places to be smokefree.

