



Southern Health Association

Southern Health Association Resolution #3-2007 Preserving Local Control of Public Health Laws

WHEREAS: The Southern Health Association (SHA) supports local control as a powerful tool that allows communities to adopt laws and find locally appropriate solutions for protecting the health of the public. Local standards are easier to enforce because they emerge from local discussion and education about what works best for that community. The Southern Health Association opposes any legislation that denies local governments the authority to protect the public health.

Many communities have passed, or are considering, local laws and regulations addressing tobacco-related health issues. Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death. Some of the Southern Health Association member states lead the nation in tobacco use, deaths and illnesses. i.e. Kentucky leads the nation in the percentage of adults who currently smoke at 28.7%, and leads the nation in tobacco-related deaths with nearly 8,000 Kentuckians dying each year because of tobacco use.¹ More than 3,000 of those tobacco-related deaths result from lung cancer.² Tobacco smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, and 43 of these chemicals are known carcinogens.

WHEREAS: Exposure to secondhand smoke causes heart and lung disease and excess deaths, and triggers asthma, pneumonia and bronchitis in children. Local laws or regulations to protect against secondhand smoke exposure in public places and workplaces are recommended as highly effective public health measures. Secondhand smoke is similar to the mainstream smoke inhaled by the smoker in that it is a complex mixture containing many chemicals (including formaldehyde, cyanide, carbon monoxide, ammonia and nicotine), many of which are known carcinogens.³

WHEREAS: The Surgeon General's Report concludes that "scientific evidence indicates that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke" and that "eliminating smoking in indoor spaces fully protects nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke."⁴ This recent report reviews the scientific evidence on secondhand smoke and ends the debate on whether or not secondhand smoke is harmful. It is harmful and the danger can be eliminated only when indoor smoking is eliminated.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: For these reasons, the **Southern Health Association** supports complete, local control for communities to adopt laws or regulations to protect the health of their citizens. Southern Health Association **opposes** any state legislation that preempts local control for protecting public health.

Origin: Kentucky 2007

Rebecca Barnes, President
Southern Health Association

Date

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¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005. Available at (accessed 9/14/2006): <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss/list.asp?cat=TU&yr=2005&qkey=4396&state=All>

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Tobacco Control State Highlights 2002: Impact and Opportunity. Atlanta, Georgia: Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2000. Available at (accessed 9/14/2006): <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Reducing Tobacco Use: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2000. Available at (accessed 9/14/2006): <http://cdc.gov/tobacco/sgr/sgr 2000/FullReport.pdf>

⁴ U.S. Department and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006. Available at (accessed 9/14/2006): <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/report/>