



## **Heart Attack Rates Would Plummet With Passage of Smokefree Law**

*North Carolina saw 21 percent decline in first 12 months*

**INDIANAPOLIS (Friday, Nov. 11, 2011)** – Thousands of Hoosier families each year could be spared the agony of a loved one suffering a heart attack if Indiana were to pass a comprehensive smokefree law. The Indiana Campaign for Smokefree Air points to new data out of North Carolina, which implemented a Smokefree Restaurants and Bars Law in January 2010, as further evidence that Indiana should pass comprehensive smokefree legislation.

North Carolina state health director Dr. Jeffrey Engel reported that emergency room visits by North Carolinians experiencing heart attacks have declined 21 percent since implementation of the law.

“Despite the fact that North Carolina is in the heart of tobacco country, their leaders recognized the value of ridding workplaces from secondhand smoke,” said Danielle Patterson, co-chair of the Indiana Campaign for Smokefree Air. “Thousands of lives have been saved in North Carolina, and Hoosiers deserve the same. There’s no legitimate reason that another Hoosier should have to suffer an unwarranted heart attack due to secondhand smoke.”

Engel also reported that the decline in heart attacks in North Carolina in 2010 represents an estimated \$3.3 to \$4.8 million in health care cost savings. Secondhand smoke is a known trigger for other health conditions like asthma, stroke, and chest pain, and is a major risk factor for lung cancer, the state’s leading cancer killer.

“Numerous studies have evaluated the effects of indoor smoking bans worldwide, and data consistently show that smokefree laws reduce heart attacks,” Patterson said. “Even a brief stay in a smoky area can trigger a heart attack in someone who is at risk, such as those with heart disease, a family history of heart disease, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol. It’s time for Indiana to save lives by clearing the air.”

The heart attack study is posted at [N.C. Report on Heart Attack Rate After Smoke-Free Law.](#)

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### **About the Indiana Campaign for Smokefree Air**

The Indiana Campaign for Smokefree Air (ICSA) is a statewide coalition of nearly 400 state and local health organizations and countless individuals and businesses committed to protecting all workers from exposure to secondhand smoke by working toward the adoption of a comprehensive smokefree air law that covers all Indiana workplaces.