



Michigan: One Step Closer to Smoke-Free Air

The Michigan House voted on May 26, 2009 on a bill that would assure a smoke free environment in workplaces throughout Michigan *including* bars and restaurants, but would allow smoking in cigar bars, specialty smoke shops and on gambling floors in Detroit's casinos (casinos on Native American land are not affected by state smoking legislation). If this bill passes the Senate, and the State agrees on any exemptions (i.e. smoke shops and casinos), Berrien County could soon see smoke free bars and restaurants.

But will it pass the Senate? And will the State agree on a

final version? Last year, both the House and the Senate passed a smoke free bill but debated over whether to allow smoking in Detroit casinos. The same debate looks possible for this year with some Senators sticking to an "all or none" stand on the bill, not allowing any exemptions. Discussion over specifics of the bill can greatly prolong its passage.

How do our local legislators feel about this bill?

House Representatives John Proos and Sharon Tyler both voted in favor of the clean indoor air bill. Senator Ron Jelinek will vote on behalf of Berrien County if the bill gets to a vote in the Senate. To let **Senator Jelinek** know how you

feel about this issue, call him at **866-305-2121**.

Why is it important that all businesses be smoke free? Nicotine concentrations among workers in bars, bowling allies and places that typically allow smoking are 2 to 18.5 times higher than workers in offices or residences. Researchers at the University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health combined data from 22 different studies and found a 24% increase in lung cancer risk among people exposed to passive smoke in the workplace. Workers who were highly exposed had a 100 percent increased (or doubled) risk of lung cancer, just from working in a smoke filled environment.

Smoke-Free Berrien County

It has been two years since Berrien County took the important step of enacting the Berrien County Clean Indoor Air Regulation on June 1st, 2007. Through this regulation, Berrien County Commissioners showed that the citizens' health and well-being was paramount in their decision making. The Clean Indoor Air Regulation assures clean, smoke free air in all indoor public places within the county, except bars and restaurants, because these establishments are exempt from the county regulation by the state.

Being able to breathe smoke-free air is critically important for staying healthy and cancer-free. Even if you do not smoke, you can still get sick from being around smokers. Second-hand smoke is the smoke you inhale

when you are next to a person who is smoking. Of the more than 4,000 chemicals found in secondhand smoke, at least 250 are known to be harmful, and 50 are known to cause cancer.

Passage of The Clean Indoor Air Regulation means less people will have to inhale second hand smoke. Smoking is not allowed in work places and public spaces inside buildings and up to 25 feet outside any doors, entrances or windows that open. The health department needs your help in educating businesses about the regulation; and in turn, we would like to help you live and work in a smoke free environment.

If you find that there continues to be smoking in an indoor worksite or public place, you are encouraged to speak to the

manager of the business and remind him or her that Berrien County is smoke free. If this proves unsuccessful, and you are forced to breathe second hand smoke, or if you are employed at a workplace that is not following the clean indoor air regulation, please contact the health department for help. You can talk to a specialist knowledgeable about enforcing the regulation, and if you like, you may complete a complaint form. The complaint is a simple form, and your name will be kept confidential. Any business that still allows smoking despite the regulation will be issued a citation *if* they do not try to work with the health department to become smoke free. You can call the health department at 927-5668

Special thanks to Theresa Green for her help with this article!

The Berrien County Health Department has four locations to serve you:

Benton Harbor	M-139 Office	Niles	Three Oaks
769 Pipestone	2106 S. M-139	1205 N. Front St.	21 N. Elm
P.O. Box 706	927-5623	684-2800	756-2008
926-7121			

Or visit us on the web at www.bchdmi.org



Berrien County Health

Department:
Preventing Disease,
Prolonging Life and
Protecting the
Health of the
Community.



How to get Involved: The Tobacco Reduction Coalition

The goal of the Berrien County Tobacco Reduction Coalition (BCTRC) is to establish a tobacco-free lifestyle as the standard for Berrien County residents. The Coalition meets the 2nd Monday of most months from 12:00 – 1:00 pm usually at 2106 M-139, Benton Harbor. If you are interested in joining the Coalition or receiving information gathered at the meetings, please call (269) 927-5668, or visit www.bctrc.org.

How to Quit Smoking

The Berrien County Health Department offers "Freedom from Smoking" support classes. We use proven methods to help you beat nicotine addiction for good. In a seven-week 8 session support group you will learn about nicotine addiction, take the fear out of quitting, learn how to deal with recovery symptoms, and develop a quit smoking plan. In addition, we offer advice on Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT's) and medications to help you quit smoking. Lastly, we teach you stress management and coping strategies, all to lead you to permanent healthy lifestyle change. All sessions are conducted by certified American Lung Association facilitators. To register, please contact Kerri Teachout at (269) 927-5668.



For more information about the regulation, smoking cessation programs, or to join the Tobacco Reduction Coalition, contact Kerri Teachout at 927-5668.

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