

SMOKE FREE IN KENTUCKY

Kentucky has one of the highest smoking rates in the nation. Unfortunately along with high smoking rates come high instances of chronic illness. Kentucky leads the nation in lung cancer rates and is one of only 12 states that fail to protect nonsmokers from secondhand smoke exposure in public places.

THE ISSUE

Kentucky has high rates of tobacco use and policies that do not protect against secondhand smoke, both of which lead to high instances of chronic illness and negative health outcomes.

- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability and death in the United States.
- Secondhand smoke contains 250 toxic chemicals and more than 70 known carcinogens.
- Studies show that secondhand smoke causes an estimated 50,000 deaths each year in the U.S.

THE PROBLEM

Kentucky's high rate of chronic illness is costing our state millions yearly in health care costs and lost productivity, as well as the significant loss of life.

- Risk for heart disease increases 25-30% and risk for lung cancer increases 20-30% in nonsmokers who work in smoke-filled environments.
- Tobacco use costs Kentucky nearly \$2 billion in health care costs and nearly \$3 billion in lost productivity every year.
- More than 41,200 nonsmokers in the United States die each year from illnesses caused by secondhand smoke.

THE SOLUTION

Kentucky must pass a statewide indoor smoke-free law that protects nonsmokers from secondhand smoke. Additionally, Kentucky insurers should adequately cover both counseling and approved treatments for those wanting to quit smoking.

- A recent poll found that 66% of Kentuckians favor a statewide indoor smoke-free law.
- Smoke-free laws reduce risk of heart attack and disease and encourage smokers to quit.
- KMA encourages Kentucky to require insurers to adequately cover physician-based counseling and approved forms of smoking cessation treatment and medications.

The KMA supports a two-part approach to reducing health risks associated with smoking. This includes the passage of a statewide smoke-free law for public places and coverage of both physician-based counseling and approved smoking cessation therapies and medications.