

## **For Immediate Release**

Contact: Shauneen Grange,  
Smokefree Idaho, Campaign Coordinator, Coalition for a Healthy Idaho  
208-869-3340 / shauneen@smokefreeidaho.org

# **Institute of Medicine Confirms Growing Concerns Regarding the Dangers of Secondhand Smoke**

Yet another in a growing list of scientifically based studies shows that comprehensive smokefree laws that cover all workers save lives. These latest findings suggest that tens of thousands of heart attacks could be prevented each year, and that states and communities that do not have comprehensive smoke-free laws could have significant cardiovascular health benefits by doing so.

"Smokefree Idaho believes that the most important thing that local government officials can do to protect the most vulnerable workers in our cities is to pass local ordinances that cover all employees from the dangers that secondhand smoke. Two hundred and twenty people die in Idaho each year due to the impact of second hand smoke. Smokefree laws save lives", says Shauneen Grange, Smokefree Idaho Campaign Coordinator.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, "*Secondhand-Smoke Exposure and Cardiovascular Effects: Making Sense of the Evidence*," confirms that secondhand smoke could cause heart attacks and that smokefree laws prevent heart attacks and save lives.

The report confirms that eliminating smoking in workplaces, restaurants, bars, and other public places is an effective way to protect Americans from the health effects of secondhand smoke, particularly on the cardiovascular system. The IOM also concluded that the evidence is compelling that even brief secondhand smoke exposure could trigger a heart attack.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Nearly three of four U.S. adults have at least one major risk factor for heart disease. Yet, only 40 percent of Americans live in areas with comprehensive state or local laws that ban smoking in public places. These findings suggest that tens of thousands of heart attacks could be prevented each year, and that states and communities that do not have comprehensive smoke-free laws could have significant cardiovascular health benefits by doing so.

There's no time to waste with this many lives at stake. It is time to mount a full-scale assault on the tobacco epidemic and eliminate all exposure to secondhand smoke. Smoke-free laws are one of the most readily available and cost-effective methods for preventing heart attacks, heart disease-related illnesses and deaths, and reducing health care costs. The only way to protect nonsmokers from the dangerous chemicals in secondhand smoke is to protect workers and the public through comprehensive smoke-free laws.

For information on quitting, visit [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit\\_smoking/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/index.htm). For the latest resources and information on protecting yourself from secondhand smoke, visit [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/secondhand\\_smoke/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/secondhand_smoke/index.htm). To view the full IOM report, visit [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=12649](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12649).

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**About Smokefree Idaho:** Smokefree Idaho is a grassroots movement of individuals and organizations who support making all indoor public and work places 100% smokefree -- including bars -- in order to protect all workers from the dangers of secondhand smoke. For more information visit [www.smokefreeidaho.org](http://www.smokefreeidaho.org)