

Indoor workplace smoking bans garner strong support from Hoosiers

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Public health researchers examining data from an Indiana Adult Tobacco Survey found nearly 75 percent of Hoosiers support a statewide or community indoor workplace smoking ban.

The results of this study could be important in increasing focused public awareness strategies aimed at reducing exposure to secondhand smoke, said Terrell Zollinger, professor of epidemiology and associate director of the Center for Health Policy in the Richard M. Fairbanks School of [Public Health](#) at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, who led the study.

Indiana is 49th on the list of 50 states for protection of workers from smoking at worksites.

Numerous studies have linked adult exposure to secondhand smoke with numerous diseases, including multiple cancers and heart diseases.

It is important that policy makers understand the basis of their constituents' support for clean air policies, Zollinger said. Policy makers generally rely on opinions expressed at hearings or in emails and telephone calls from constituents; critical opinions of smoke-free policies are often overrepresented in those circumstances, Zollinger said.

"What this study does is give policy makers a much more complete picture of how their constituents support these kinds of laws in an objective way," he said.

Data the researchers analyzed came from a 2008 cross-sectional statewide study of 2,140 Indiana adults conducted by the Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Agency.

The study found that 72.3 percent of the respondents supported laws making indoor workplaces smoke-free. Strong support for banning smoking in indoor workplaces was found regardless of whether the respondent lived in an urban or a rural area, Zollinger said.

According to the study, three variables were significant predictors of support: People who never or formerly smoked were more supportive, as were females and those who were more aware of the health hazards of secondhand smoke.

About 32 percent of respondents who are current smokers support indoor workplace smoking bans; 68 percent of former smokers did so, while 85 percent of respondents who had never smoked said they support indoor workplace smoking bans.

The study concludes support was constant among most groups across the state, suggesting policy makers would have the backing of their constituents to pass such legislation.

According to Zollinger, the results of this study suggest that efforts to gain additional support for smoke-free-air laws should focus on men, people unaware of the health hazards from [secondhand smoke](#), and smokers and former smokers.

Provided by Indiana University

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