

Study finds smoke-free communities associated with fewer hospitalizations for emphysema

April 22 2014, by Ann Blackford

(Medical Xpress)—In a new study published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, researchers from the University of Kentucky College of Nursing and College of Public Health found that individuals living in a community with comprehensive smoke-free workplace laws or regulations are 22 percent less likely to be hospitalized for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or emphysema.

The study compared patient discharge data between 2003 and 2011 against compiled local smoke-free laws collected from the Smoke-free Ordinance database from the Kentucky Center for Smoke-free Policy.

Findings from the study indicate a 22 percent decrease in likelihood of being hospitalized for COPD for those who live in communities with comprehensive smoke-free workplace laws or regulations compared to those with moderate, weak or no laws. Further, living in a community with an established law resulted in a 21 percent lower likelihood of experiencing hospitalization due to COPD.

"Smoke-free public policies, particularly when they cover all workplaces with no exceptions and have been in place for at least one year, may provide protection against exacerbations of COPD that lead to hospitalizations, with potential to save lives and decrease [health care costs](#)," said Ellen J. Hahn, professor and lead author of the study. "Given that such a high percentage of Kentuckians live in at-risk rural areas and

lack the protective factor of income or smoke-free laws, the state faces a higher risk of COPD."

More information: Ellen J. Hahn, Mary Kay Rayens, Sarah Adkins, Nick Simpson, Susan Frazier, and David M. Mannino. (2014). "Fewer Hospitalizations for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease in Communities With Smoke-Free Public Policies." *American Journal of Public Health*. Published online ahead of print April 17, 2014: e1–e7. [DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2014.301887](https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2014.301887)

Provided by University of Kentucky

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