

County smoking bans in bars, restaurants cut asthma-related hospitalizations

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Expanding smoke-free laws in bars or restaurants may be more impactful in preventing asthma-related hospitalizations than smoke-free laws in non-hospitality workplaces, according to a Georgia State University study published in the *Canadian Respiratory Journal*.

While the majority of nonhospitality workplaces (e.g., office buildings) are covered by either public or private smoking bans, only about half of the U.S. population lives in places where 100 percent smoke-free laws are in force in all workplaces, including bars and restaurants.

Previous research on the impact of smoke-free laws has focused on state laws. In the present study, the researchers examined multistate county-level data using Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP) state inpatient data (2002 to 2009) in combination with the American Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation's smoke-free laws database of state and county laws.

In total, data from 17 [states](#) was included in the analysis: 12 with state smoke-free laws and five without state smoke-free laws. These 17 states represent 840 counties with approximately 103 million people, or 35 percent of the U.S. population. Twenty-nine counties included in the study passed a county-level clean indoor law during the study period, 16 counties already had a county-level nonhospitality workplace law in place, and 20 counties already had a county-level [restaurant](#) or bar law in place.

Overall, the researchers found that asthma-related hospital discharges were not reduced by enacting smoke-free [workplace](#) laws within county jurisdictions. However, enacting smoke-free restaurant and bar laws was tied to reductions in asthma discharges.

"Only 49 percent of the U.S. population lives in a location where smoke-free laws are in force in all bars, restaurants, and workplaces," says lead author Glenn Landers, Sc.D., director of health systems at the Georgia Health Policy Center. "Clearly, there are still opportunities to reduce secondhand smoke exposure and health outcomes through changes in county smoking laws."

Provided by Georgia State University

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