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## **Colorado Celebrates Five Years of Breathing Safer Air**

### **More work to be done in preventing secondhand smoke exposure**

Denver, CO - July 1 marks the fifth anniversary of the Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act, passed in 2006, and designed to protect the health of both the public and employees by reducing their exposure to the dangerous chemicals in tobacco smoke. The Clean Indoor Air Act came as a result of the scientific evidence showing the negative effects of secondhand smoke and the momentum created by communities passing local smoke-free laws and policies prior to 2006.

Millions of Colorado's residents, workers, and visitors are enjoying smoke-free environments in many workplaces and public places. According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, the state smoke-free laws in conjunction with a voter-approved Amendment 35 tobacco tax increase that preceded it and public health interventions that accompanied it, have resulted in over 100,000 fewer smokers in Colorado since 2005.

“Smoke-free laws save lives, reduce health care costs and are an important part of making Colorado a healthier state,” said Cindy Liverance, Vice President of Programs for the American Lung Association in Colorado. “While this is cause to celebrate the achievements of the Clean Indoor Air Act, we have to recognize that it’s not a resting point but a call to action to further protect Coloradans from the harms of tobacco use.” added Liverance.

Researchers have found that smoke-free laws can have immediate health benefits. Thanks to their smoke-free law, Pueblo hospital admissions for heart attacks dropped 41 percent in the three years after the 2003 passage of its smoke-free ordinance. “This is an incredible

achievement and more evidence supporting the benefits to our heart from having smoke-free air,” said Dr. David Port, board member and volunteer with the American Heart Association in Colorado

Tobacco use imposes enormous costs on Colorado, including chronic health problems such as cancer, heart disease and stroke with more than \$1.3 billion in health care costs. Tobacco use will kill 4,300 men and women in Colorado each year. Tobacco smoke is hazardous for everyone. According to the 2010 U.S. Surgeon General’s report on tobacco smoke, tobacco smoke contains hundreds of toxic and cancer-causing chemicals and there is no safe level of exposure. Arsenic, hydrogen cyanide, formaldehyde, and carbon monoxide are some of the dangerous substances in tobacco smoke.

While Colorado achieved success with the passage of the state smoke-free law in 2006 and the inclusion of casinos in 2008 there is still much to be done to advance tobacco policies in Colorado. Workers and the public are still being exposed to tobacco smoke in places such as tobacco and cigar bars, hookah lounges, some smoking restaurants and bars at DIA, and outdoor patios.

“It should not matter if the smoke comes from a cigar, cigarette, or hookah pipe, breathing in the dangerous chemicals found in tobacco smoke should not be a condition of employment or visiting a public place in Colorado,” said Bob Doyle, Executive Director of the Colorado Tobacco Education and Prevention Alliance. “The great news is Colorado communities have taken action to strengthen the existing laws and we hope more will follow,” Doyle added.

For example, in the community of Arvada, you will not find any tobacco or cigar bars, hookah lounges, or smoking on patios. Arvada is not alone. Many communities around the state have strengthened their local policies.

For more information about the state law, secondhand smoke, or smoke-free air in your community, go to [www.smokefreecolorado.org](http://www.smokefreecolorado.org) or call or e-mail the Colorado Tobacco Education and Prevention Alliance at 303-577-9991 or [bdoyle@ctepa.org](mailto:bdoyle@ctepa.org) .

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