



Scottish Study Gives Support to Health Benefits from Smokefree Air

U.S. public-health experts say the evidence from a Scottish study is the strongest yet on the health benefits of smokefree public places. According to the study, which appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in July 2008, hospital admissions for heart attacks and acute coronary problems fell 17 percent overall in the year after Scotland went smokefree in March 2006.

When Scotland created smokefree environments in enclosed public areas and workplaces, researchers found a 21 percent reduction in heart problem admissions among people who had never smoked. The study also found that nonsmokers accounted for 67 percent of the overall reduction in heart-disease hospitalizations and a 20 percent reduction in hospital admissions following the legislation.

Inhaled secondhand smoke causes blood platelets to become stickier, thus more likely to clot and clog arteries, even after brief exposure to low levels of secondhand smoke. These dangerous effects from secondhand smoke make heart disease the most immediate benefit of smokefree air, according to public-health experts.



“In the U.S. every year, there are approximately one million hospitalizations for acute coronary syndrome,” said Dr. David Cohen, director of cardiovascular research at Saint Luke’s Mid American Heart Institute in Kansas City, MO. “Each episode generally costs between \$10,000-\$20,000 to treat, pegging the cost of this care at \$10 million per year or more.”



Today more than 60 percent of the U.S. population is covered by some type of smokefree air legislation, according to Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights. It's time to clear the air and pass comprehensive smokefree legislation here in Michigan!