



ANCHOR

ACCELERATING NATIONAL COMMUNITY HEALTH OUTCOMES THROUGH REINFORCING PARTNERSHIPS

PROTECTING WORKERS FROM THE HARMS OF SECONDHAND SMOKE



The American Heart Association (AHA) spent more than a year establishing and building up the capacity of a coalition of organizations and individuals trying to raise awareness about the dangers of secondhand smoke in Arlington, TX. The coalition launched numerous education and awareness campaigns to educate the public how exposure to secondhand smoke harms everyone, even people who don't smoke. The coalition's efforts contributed to extending the existing smoke-free policy to include bars, nightclubs and pool halls.

The Challenge

Exposure to secondhand smoke contributes to the preventable deaths of tens of thousands of adults each year. That's because secondhand smoke increases the risk of developing heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, respiratory illness and other potentially deadly health problems. There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke that contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds that are toxic. In 2015, Arlington hospitals received 8,348 visits related to heart disease and lung cancer. Those trips resulted in charges totaling more than \$381 million, according to the Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council President Steve Love.

Hospitality and service industry employees, such as bartenders and wait staff, are especially vulnerable to the harms of secondhand smoke. Workplace policies that prohibit indoor smoking are an effective way to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke. Whether you work in a corporate office or bar, no worker should have to sacrifice their health to earn a paycheck," said Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council President Steve Love."



“Study after study show no impact to business occurs because of a smoke-free ordinance. Simply put, smoke-free ordinances save lives and communities save money with lower healthcare costs and greater productivity thanks to a healthier workforce.”

– Steve Love, president and CEO, DallasFort Worth Hospital Council

The Solution

The AHA educated the public about the health dangers of secondhand smoke on college campuses, at hospitals, and during community events. Additionally, the AHA also pulled together about 30 local organizations and businesses to establish the Smoke-Free Arlington coalition. Coalition members represent a diverse range of interests and backgrounds, ranging from the Arlington branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to the national Vietnamese American Medical Association. Coalition partners tapped the resources and members of their organizations to spread the word about the dangers of secondhand smoke through television ads, social media campaigns and work with traditional mainstream media. Meanwhile, the AHA provided media training, print brochures and various other implementation resources to support coalition efforts.

Sustaining Success

Smoke-Free Arlington, a broad coalition of organizations and individuals who believe in the right to breathe smoke-free air indoors, will continue to work to ensure successful implementation of Arlington's policy changes. It will also help disseminate cessation resources to encourage smokers to quit by working with one of its coalition members, the Tarrant County Public Health Department. Arlington's smoke-free policy also has the potential of influencing neighboring cities, such as Fort Worth, to pass local policies to protect all workers from secondhand smoke.

Policy, System and Environmental Change

Prior to the decision to expand its smoke-free policy, smoking was prohibited in the city of Arlington's restaurants, retail shops, schools, hospitals and other public places of employment. The expanded smoke-free policy now prevents smoking in bars, nightclubs, billiard halls, adult businesses, and bowling centers.

Results

The expanded smoke-free policy in the city of Arlington, includes bars, adult clubs, pool halls and bowling centers. The new policy will help protect the city's 388,000 residents from the health harms of secondhand smoke. Arlington, the second-largest city in Tarrant County after Fort Worth, is now designated a "100 percent Smoke Free City," a benchmark based on World Health Organization criteria. More than 70 Texas cities have smoke-free policies in place, according to Smoke-Free Texas, an organization that supports smoke-free indoor air policies across the state.

Get Involved

Smoke-Free Arlington is a broad coalition of organizations and individuals working to ensure all Arlington residents have the right to breathe smoke-free indoor air. To learn more about the coalition's efforts, visit www.facebook.com/smokefreeArlington or www.heart.org/quitsmoking to learn more about how you can quit smoking.

