



Forsyth County
Department of Public Health

C. Timothy Monroe, MD, MPH
Health Director

October 23, 2009

From: C. Timothy Monroe, MD, MPH, Director
Forsyth County Department of Public Health

To: Forsyth County Restaurant and Bar Owner/Manager

Re: Smoking Regulations for Restaurants and Bars

On **January 2, 2010** a new state law will go into effect that will ban smoking in enclosed areas in almost all restaurants, bars and lodging establishments in North Carolina. Under House Bill 2, Session Law 2009-27 *An Act to Prohibit Smoking in Certain Public Places*¹, smoking will not be allowed in any establishment that serves food and receives sanitation inspections from the health department or any bar that holds a state permit authorizing it to sell malt beverages (e.g., beer), wine, or mixed drinks on its premises, with very few exceptions.

I am writing to inform you of the new requirements associated with this law, and to let you know that your local health department is interested in helping you comply with this important new law in order to protect the health of your workers and customers. I want to direct you to a new website, www.smokefree.nc.gov that will also provide assistance with compliance.

No later than 12:00 a.m. on January 2, 2010, a person in charge of a restaurant, bar or lodging establishment that is subject to the new law will need to:

- Post the required no-smoking signs in conspicuous locations,
- Remove indoor ashtrays and other smoking receptacles, and
- Direct any person who is smoking to extinguish the cigarette, cigar or other lighted tobacco product.

The Division of Public Health has drafted implementing rules (attached) for adoption by the Commission for Public Health on October 30, 2009. Among other things, the rules give detailed guidance on **signage**. However, the rules will not be finalized until mid-December. In the meantime, the Division of Public Health and your Local Health Department recommend the enclosed sign(s) for your restaurant, bar or lodging facility. Additional copies of free, downloadable signs and materials are available at www.smokefree.nc.gov or can be downloaded and printed through an office supply or sign store.

Enclosed with this letter is a basic **Restaurant and Bar Owner/Manager's Guide** to answer the key questions you may have about the new law. The required steps for compliance are simple; your active participation will help you avoid any potential violations. We want to assist you in implementing this law. A complete business kit will be provided to you by early December 2009, which we encourage you to use to ease the transition of your business as the new law takes effect on January 2, 2010.

Finally, as a result of the statewide smoke-free law, some smokers are likely to be motivated to quit. As an employer, you are in a position to assist your employees who want to quit. N.C. is fortunate to have a free and confidential resource – the NC Tobacco Use Quitline, available at 1-800-784-8669 to help any tobacco user who wants to quit. This service is available 8am to 3am 7 days a week. A card is enclosed for you to post on your employee bulletin board.

If you have any questions please contact Debbie Mason at 336-703-3260 at the Forsyth County Department of Public Health.



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Public Health • Office of the State Health Director
1931 Mail Service Center • Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-1931

Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor
Lanier M. Cansler, Secretary

Jeffrey P. Engel, M.D.
State Health Director

October 23, 2009

Dear N.C. Restaurant and Bar Owners and Managers:

As your State Health Director, I celebrate the new law that makes North Carolina restaurants and bars smokefree as of January 2, 2010.

Why is this law important for North Carolina and public health? Secondhand smoke is a serious hazard that causes early death and disease in North Carolinians who do not smoke. Nonsmokers regularly exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work increase their risk of developing heart disease by 25 to 30 percent and lung cancer by 20 to 30 percent. Heart disease and cancer are the leading killers of North Carolinians. Secondhand smoke exposure is also associated with an increased risk of stroke, and increases pregnant women's risk of having low birth-weight babies.

We also know now that no amount of secondhand smoke is safe. Children, pregnant women, older people, and people with heart or breathing problems are at particular risk. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported on a body of published studies that found that laws making indoor workplaces and public places smoke-free were associated with rapid, sizeable reductions in hospital admissions for heart attacks.

What are the benefits of this new law for North Carolina, our citizens and businesses? Smokefree workplaces and public places is one proven way to reduce unnecessary death, disability and health care costs among North Carolinians by eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke among workers and the public who dine out. It also sets a good role model for our young people, and helps tobacco users who want to quit. The new law sets a level playing field for restaurants and bars, and this means the new law may not only be good for health but good for business, as 79 percent of North Carolina adults are nonsmokers!

Our local health departments look forward to working with you to make sure you know about this new law and come into compliance by January 2, 2010. Please contact your local health department if you have questions about the new law. We hope this packet helps prepare you for the simple steps to compliance.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey P. Engel, M.D.
State Health Director



North Carolina Public Health
Working for a healthier and safer North Carolina
Everywhere. Everyday. Everybody.



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