

WARNING: You don't have to smoke to die from it. Second-hand smoke kills.

# Executive Summary

## Overview

Second-hand smoke causes illness in more than 40,000 New Yorkers and kills approximately 1,000 New Yorkers *every year*. Although the current New York City smoke-free law guarantees the right to a safe, smoke-free workplace for *some* employees, loopholes in the law may leave as many as a million workers—especially bar and restaurant workers—unprotected from second-hand smoke. Closing those loopholes could save 11,000 lives in New York City and won't hurt business.

## Tobacco—The Leading Epidemic of Our Time (Fact Sheet 1)

- ◆ Cigarettes are the #1 cause of premature death in the United States. From 1995 to 1999, smoking caused more than 440,000 premature deaths each year.
- ◆ Smoking is also the #1 cause of preventable death in New York City, killing more than one New Yorker every hour—twice as many as AIDS, alcohol, murder, and suicide combined.
- ◆ More than a million New Yorkers smoke and, unless urgent action is taken, nearly 100,000 New Yorkers will die from tobacco-related diseases over the next 10 years, nearly half before they're 65 years old.
- ◆ Smoking costs Americans more than \$157 billion a year in health-care costs, decreased productivity, and lost earnings.

## Second-Hand Smoke Kills (Fact Sheet 2)

- ◆ Second-hand smoke—the smoke we breathe from other people's cigarettes—causes cancer, heart disease, and many other illnesses. This has been verified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Surgeon General, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, and the World Health Organization.
- ◆ Second-hand smoke contains many of the chemicals classified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as "Group A" carcinogens, such as arsenic, benzene, and vinyl chloride.
- ◆ Second-hand smoke is a leading cause of death in the U.S., killing more than 40,000 people each year, including approximately 1,000 New Yorkers.
- ◆ The number of cancer deaths caused by second-hand smoke is higher than the total number of cancer deaths caused by asbestos, radionuclides, arsenic, benzene, vinyl chloride, radiation, pesticides, hazardous waste sites, chemicals found in drinking water, industrial chemicals, contaminated sludge, and mining waste **combined**.
- ◆ Just 30 minutes of exposure to second-hand smoke produces some of the same physical reactions as would occur from smoking.
- ◆ Second-hand smoke causes illness, such as ear infections in children, asthma, and respiratory infections, in more than 40,000 New Yorkers every year.

(over)



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## Closing the Loopholes in New York City's Smoke-Free Law Could Save 11,000 Lives (Fact Sheet 3)

- ◆ New York City's current smoke-free law may leave as many as one million workers unprotected from second-hand smoke.
- ◆ Wait staff, cooks, and bartenders have the highest level of exposure to second-hand smoke of any occupational group—up to 2 to 6 times higher than people who work in offices. In an 8-hour shift, bartenders inhale the same amount of cancer-causing chemicals from second-hand smoke as if they'd smoked more than half a pack of cigarettes.
- ◆ Bar and restaurant workers are 50% more likely to get lung cancer than other workers, even after taking their own smoking habits into account.
- ◆ Extending the smoke-free workplace law could save 11,000 lives in New York City, including 4,000 non-smokers currently exposed to second-hand smoke at work, and 7,000 smokers who otherwise would have died from a tobacco-related illness (among the 22,000 smokers expected to quit if the law is strengthened).
- ◆ Studies indicate that 10% to 20% of smokers would quit if smoking were prohibited in their workplace. Even among those who continue to smoke, average consumption would decrease by 6% —nearly 100 million fewer cigarettes smoked every year in New York City.
- ◆ New York City voters support stronger smoke-free workplace laws—eliminating smoking in all offices, restaurants, and bars—by a margin of 3 to 1.

## Smoke-Free Workplace Laws Don't Hurt Business (Fact Sheet 4)

- ◆ Smoke-free workplace laws have had either a neutral or positive effect on business. Studies analyzing objective economic measures such as sales and employment figures have found no negative economic impact.
- ◆ Even the tobacco industry admits that smoke-free workplace laws don't hurt business: "*...the economic arguments often used by the industry to scare off smoking ban activity were no longer working...These arguments simply had no credibility with the public, which isn't surprising when you consider that our dire predictions in the past rarely came true.*"  
—Internal document, Philip Morris, 1994.
- ◆ Smoke-free workplace laws do not hurt tourism. Europeans and other foreign nationals have lower per capita tobacco consumption rates than Americans. Market share analyses of international tourism indicate that smoke-free workplace policies do not change travelers' choice of destination.