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CONTACT: Emily Gerkin Palsrok
517-316-0210 (office)
517-862-5462 (cell)
epalsrok@baileypr.com

CSA optimistic about continued progress on smokefree workplaces, but concerned about exemptions

Lansing, Mich. – The Campaign for Smokefree Air (CSA) is encouraged today by the state House’s actions in moving the smokefree bill forward, but is disappointed that it chose to include exemptions, causing the bill to be sent to the other chamber.

“We were pleased by the additional support in the House, in that nine more representatives see the need for smokefree air. However, we are concerned that the House did not concur with the Senate passed version and instead allowed exemptions,” said Susan Schechter, spokesperson for CSA. “All employees deserve the same protections from secondhand smoke. We will continue to work with both chambers to pass a comprehensive smokefree workplace bill.”

The House passed a vehicle bill, HB 5074, which is essentially the same bill that was passed by the chamber in December. The bill was approved 65-39, and sent back to the Senate for consideration.

Of the 33 states that already have smokefree workplace laws, more than two dozen regulate smoking inside casinos, including six that provide smokefree gaming areas and halls. Three more states (Montana, Nebraska and Oregon) will expand their smokefree policies to include casinos in 2009. The city council in Atlantic City recently voted to close the loophole in New Jersey’s law that exempted casinos -- all worksites in the city will be smokefree starting in October.

About CSA

The Campaign for Smokefree Air is a grassroots coalition with more than 260 members, including leadership from the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Lung Association of Michigan, Michigan Health & Hospital Association, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, and Michigan State Medical Society, as well as other statewide groups that support making workplaces, including restaurants and bars, smokefree. For more information about the Campaign for Smokefree Air, please visit www.MakeMIAirSmokefree.org.

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