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Bar Licenses Increase in Smokefree Madison, Wisconsin *Gives Support to Michigan's Campaign for Smokefree Air Efforts*

Lansing, Mich. – Since becoming smokefree in July 2005, Madison, Wisconsin, has seen an increase in bar licenses though opponents claimed that many bars would go out of business.

A total of 16 new liquor licenses have been issued since Madison's law went into effect. It compares to 13 over the same six-month period in 2004. To date they have a total of 339 establishments with liquor licenses. However, Michigan has seen a decrease of liquor licenses issued from November 15, 2005 to February 7, 2006.

“It's encouraging to see the positive effects of going smokefree in bars and restaurants,” said Judy Stewart, campaign manager for Michigan's Campaign for Smokefree Air (CSA). “This shows that not only does going smokefree provide protection from deadly secondhand smoke exposure to all employees and patrons, but it is positive numbers for the bar and restaurant industries. We remain confident that Michigan would see the same outcome from a smokefree policy in the Great Lakes state.”

The city of Appleton, Wisconsin also implemented clean indoor air legislation last July. It has since seen only one bar close, and that still remains a five-year low in the number of bar closings.

New York has experienced the benefits of being smokefree since 2003. In the state of New York, studies showed that though there was a small drop in sales immediately following the ban, businesses rebounded safely with a .2 percent rise in sales from March to May 2004 and another rise from June to August of 1.1 percent.

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CSA is currently sponsoring legislation in Michigan to provide smokefree worksites for all employees, including those at restaurants and bars. CSA is a grassroots coalition founded by the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, and American Lung Association, as well as other statewide groups who support eliminating secondhand smoke dangers in workplaces, restaurants and bars.

The campaign represents a bipartisan approach to making Michigan smokefree. Senators Ray Basham (D-Taylor) and Tom George (R-Kalamazoo Township) along with Representatives Barb Vander Veen (R-Allendale) and Brenda Clack (D-Flint) are each sponsoring measures to make workplaces, restaurants and bars smokefree. The legislation was introduced in April and awaits committee action.

For more information about the Campaign for Smokefree Air, visit www.MakeMIAirSmokefree.org.

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