

Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition

E-Newsletter

Supporting Tobacco Control for Kansas

February 2007, Volume 2, Issue 2

Welcome to the TFKC E-Newsletter for those interested or involved in tobacco control in Kansas. We would like to hear your comments and ideas for future issues. See the "Sign Up" information on the previous page to receive this e-newsletter every month.

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Senate Bill would provide more funding

SB 318 would allocate the expected Master Settlement Agreement bonus funds to tobacco control programming. Heart, Cancer, Lung, the Cancer Partnership, the Synar Advisory Group, KPHA, several health departments and physicians and TFKC are providing testimony in support of that bill before the Senate Ways and Means committee. This is another chance for advocates to make their views known to policy makers and to their local newspapers.

State Smoking Ban to Interim Committee

Kansas is unlikely to join the other 21 states that have outlawed smoking in public places this year. Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt, R- Independence, announced in mid-February that Senate Bill 37, which would have prohibited smoking in virtually all of the state's workplaces, would not be debated on the floor in 2007. Instead, he said the Senate would request that an interim committee be appointed to dig into the issue and make a recommendation to the 2008 Legislature.

Schmidt had earlier authored an amendment to the bill to allow county commissioners to opt-out of smoking ban. In counties where the commission opted out of the ban, the amendment would have allowed citizens to put the issue on the ballot for a countywide vote. Schmidt said he thought the bill, as amended, would come close to passing, but he wouldn't test it. "I don't think anybody wants to vote on this thing this year," he said.

Representatives from TFKC, Heart and Cancer worked with Schmidt to understand the problems that exist with the bill. There are more than a dozen exemptions or compromises in

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the current bill. It would not provide clean indoor air for everyone in the State as written. The Senate Judiciary Committee passed the bill without recommendation in January, reflecting dissent within the committee over whether the state should intervene given that local governments are already making their own laws.

But Sen. David Wysong, R-Mission Hills, the bill's sponsor, said he was encouraged by the announcement the bill wouldn't make it to the Senate calendar. "I think this is going to help the bill," he said. "I knew it would not pass both houses in the first year anyway."

"It's only a matter of time until we get some additional regulation," Schmidt said.

To date, 17 Kansas cities and one county have adopted ordinances that restrict or prohibit smoking in public places.

Talks in **Derby** about following suit have been ongoing for more than six months. But the promise of the statewide bill didn't halt the movement for a local ordinance. "The state actions have impacted Derby's discussions as they always do," said Mandy Wagner, assistant to the Derby city manager. "Our focus is still for our citizens and what is best for Derby, and that we as a community should decide."

Derby, on Wichita's southeast side, has two different forms of a local ordinance pending before the city council, Wagner said. But she said the council hasn't been able to reach an agreement on the scope the ordinance or a date on which to make it effective.

Both proposals would ban smoking in most public and workplaces. Exemptions that have been considered include stand-alone tobacco shops; private clubs and fraternal organizations; manufacturing plants and nursing homes. The difference between the two is their starting dates: one would begin on August 1, 2008; the second is contingent on a Wichita ban. At the council's February 13 meeting, council members agreed to table the discussion until a consensus could be reached. During the same meeting, the council approved the city's legislative agenda which supports a state-wide smoking ban, Wagner said.

Congress introduces Legislation for FDA authority over Tobacco

Until Congress grants the FDA authority over tobacco products, the tobacco companies will continue to get away with their harmful practices that addict children and make it difficult for smokers to quit. The proposed legislation would grant the FDA the authority and resources to effectively regulate the manufacturing, marketing, labeling, distribution and sale of tobacco products. The FDA would have authority to:

- Restrict tobacco advertising and promotions, especially to children. Stop illegal sales of tobacco products to children.
- Ban candy-flavored cigarettes, which clearly are starter products for young new smokers.

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- Require changes in tobacco products, such as the removal of harmful ingredients or the reduction of nicotine levels.
- Prohibit health claims about so-called “reduced risk” products that are not scientifically proven or that would discourage current tobacco users from quitting or encourage new users to start.
- Require tobacco companies to disclose the contents of tobacco products, changes to their products and research about the health effects of their products.
- Require larger and more informative health warnings on tobacco products.
- Prohibit terms such as “light,” “mild” and “low-tar” that have mislead consumers into believing that certain cigarettes are safer than others.

The bill in no way restricts states from pursuing policies such as smoke-free laws, tobacco taxes, restricts on sales and distribution, etc.

Nominations Sought

The TFKC Nominating Committee is taking suggestions for officer or regional representative positions on the board of the Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition. The committee is developing a slate of officers to provide leadership for the statewide coalition. The new terms begin in July.

The officers’ positions to be filled are president, vice president, treasurer and secretary, as well as the six regional representatives.

Please consider nominating a tobacco control advocate, or even yourself, to help guide TFKC in the next year. TFKC needs people interested in improving the health of Kansans and reducing the economic and health damage caused by tobacco use in Kansas.

Congratulations to NACDD Winners

KDHE and the University of Kansas Medical Center Area Health Education Center (AHEC) were named the winner of this year’s Program Delivery award by the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD).

AHEC implemented the “Treating Tobacco Use During Pregnancy and Beyond” initiative. The program held trainings across the state to inform health care providers about tobacco use and cessation, as well as the Kansas Quitline. They were offered a stipend to develop reminder systems in their clinics.

More than 500 healthcare providers attended the training sessions and many are referring pregnant women to the Quitline.

Clean Air Kansas City received the NACDD Award for Public Policy for its dedicated, resourceful approach to clean indoor air that has achieved considerable success in shaping public health policy in the KC area.

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Youth Grants to be announced

Grant applications have been reviewed and there are some 22 youth grants being awarded in amounts ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000. Funding is from a Sunflower Foundation grant and KDHE.

Save the Date

The 2007 **Spit Tobacco Summit** has been scheduled for **August 29** at the Hutchinson Cosmosphere. The Summit is focused on youth, tobacco control advocates, oral health professionals, school nurses and anyone interested in making a difference about smokeless tobacco use in Kansas.

For additional information, contact Becky Tuttle, KDHE, 316-337-6058, btuttle@kdhe.state.

Please share this newsletter with others interested in tobacco control in Kansas. The TFKC electronic newsletter will be distributed monthly to your e-mail. Please report a change of your e-mail address to TFKC .

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