



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

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STUDY SHOWS DRAMATIC AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT BECAUSE OF SMOKE-FREE LAW

92% Improvement in Bars and Restaurants with “Unhealthy” Air Quality

MADISON -- Air quality samples taken in more than 200 Wisconsin bars and restaurants that had previously been found to have “Unhealthy” air showed a 92% improvement after enactment of Wisconsin’s smoke-free air law, according to a study by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and the UW Carbone Comprehensive Cancer Center. The study looked at air quality data recorded in businesses before and after the law’s July 5th implementation.

“Governor Doyle has worked hard to make sure Wisconsin workers were protected from secondhand smoke, and I’m very pleased that the air quality in their workplaces has improved thanks to the smoke-free law,” said DHS Secretary Karen Timberlake. “I’m glad that customers and employees are now breathing easier in Wisconsin’s bars and restaurants.”

Before July 5, air quality in 21% of the businesses was classified as “Hazardous”, the highest level according to Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources standards. Some 28% of the businesses had air classified as “Very Unhealthy,” with 38% classified as having “Unhealthy” air. Testing done after the law went into effect found that 97% of the bars and restaurants had “Good” or “Satisfactory” air.

The study also saw dangerous small-particle levels from cigarette smoke drop from 160 micrograms on average to 13 micrograms. Anything at or above 35 micrograms is considered “Unhealthy” air. Public health agencies collected the air samples using air quality testing equipment. Most of the testing was done on weekends when the businesses were busier and more employees and customers could potentially be exposed to secondhand smoke. To view the report visit: <http://sep.uwcarbone.wisc.edu/>.

“No one should have to risk their health to earn a paycheck or even just to enjoy a night out,” said Mark Wegner, M.D., M.P.H., Chronic Disease Medical Director for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services. “This report clearly shows the positive health impact of smoke-free policies.”

For information on the law: www.WIBetterSmokeFree.com. For information on the state’s tobacco prevention efforts: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/tobacco.

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