



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **New Centers for Disease Control report subtly blasts Wisconsin**

*BreatheFree Wisconsin supporters tell lawmakers "It's Time"*

(Madison, WI) – A statewide coalition of health groups, health advocates, and business and tourism associations Thursday praised a new report by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that shows Wisconsin has fallen badly behind other states in reducing health problems due to secondhand smoke.

The *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, released today, shows that the number of states with smoke-free workplaces – including bars – has risen to 25, triple the number from 2005. The number of states with no restrictions has dropped in half, from 16 to 8.

“For a state like Wisconsin to become one of the holdouts for tobacco companies borders on disgraceful,” said Maureen Busalacchi, head of SmokeFree Wisconsin and a spokesperson for the “It’s Time” Coalition.

Since this study was completed, Nebraska and Iowa have also gone smoke-free – and Michigan is about to, she noted. “How our lawmakers could cater to tobacco companies – none of which are even located here – is politically and morally embarrassing.”

Actually, a majority of lawmakers in both the Democratic and Republican parties say they would support smoke-free workplaces, she noted. Governor Jim Doyle has been a fierce supporter. But leaders of both houses blocked the Breathe Free Wisconsin Act from coming to a vote this past spring.

The CDC notes that making all workplaces smoke-free is the only proven way to truly reduce health damages from secondhand smoke. In 2006, the U.S. Surgeon General reported that there is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure.

“The Surgeon General is the nation’s top health expert – and we should listen,” Busalacchi said. “The Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta remains among the

world's leading experts in tobacco-related disease.”

“All the states around us have found the political courage to protect people’s health. At the very least, we should learn from their example – and reject lawmakers’ lame excuses not to get this done in Wisconsin. It is time.”

*The online version of the report is at [www.cdc.gov/tobacco](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco). For more information about the It’s Time Coalition, visit [www.itstimewisconsin.org](http://www.itstimewisconsin.org).*

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