

March 1, 2023

Senators:

My name is Dr. Eric Johnson, I am a physician in Grand Forks. I have been very involved with tobacco issues in North Dakota for about 15 years and had direct participation in getting the smoke free law on the ballot in 2012, which passed with the voters by a 2 to 1 margin. In fact, it passed in every county in North Dakota.

Several polls done since that time show that the law is still viewed as very favorable with similar or better numbers. Smoke free has become the norm and expectation for North Dakotans since that time.

Second hand smoke is known to be deadly and is also a worker's rights issue. Strong data has built up over the years, and about 50,000 people die from secondhand smoke diseases, including lung and heart disease, in the U.S. every year. To bring this closer to home, we did a study right after the law was passed by the voters that showed a 30% decrease in heart attacks in Grand Forks County after the law took effect and was published in one of the leading scientific journals dealing with tobacco health issues, Nicotine & Tobacco Research [Impact of a comprehensive smoke-free law following a partial smoke-free law on incidence of heart attacks at a rural community hospital - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

This is similar to many other published studies, including Olmstead County, MN by the Mayo Clinic. [Myocardial infarction and sudden cardiac death in Olmsted County, Minnesota, before and after smoke-free workplace laws - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

Another concern at this time is that it appears that virtually any bar could declare themselves to be a cigar bar, completely circumventing the popular smoke free law.

As a North Dakota physician, I'm asking at this time that you follow the established scientific data regarding secondhand smoke and vote no on HB 1229. I would be happy to answer further questions. My opinions are my own, and do not reflect my employers.

Sincerely,
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