

OUR VIEW

Time for smoking ban

In his budget address Tuesday, Gov. Jim Doyle said it's time for Wisconsin to enact a statewide **smoking ban** in public buildings.

The fact is, the time is overdue.

Wisconsin now stands in the minority as a state that still allows smoking in public buildings, and is the only Midwestern state that does

**Wisconsin
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so. For the sake of public health, it's time to get on board.

It's a fact that exposure to secondhand smoke increases a person's risk of heart disease and lung cancer by as much as 30 percent. Smoking-related illnesses cost Wisconsin over \$3 billion each year in health care and lost productivity, according to the University of Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Research Center. A U.S. surgeon general report issued in 2006 says there is no safe level of secondhand smoke, calling it the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States.

No one should have to be exposed to a known carcinogen simply because they want to go out to eat or have a drink, and no one should be forced to work in such conditions.

Wisconsin polls show public support for a ban. It's time.