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WI Smoking Ban on Fast Track

May 11, 2009

Madison, WI - It appears a measure that would ban smoking in all public places in Wisconsin is heading for passage. That legislative action could come as early as Wednesday, after a compromise was announced last week that would implement the ban in July of 2010. That would give bars in places not covered by a current local ban more than a year to prepare.

Allison Miller of the *American Cancer Society* says the measure has momentum.

"We're obviously excited that this piece of legislation is moving quickly in the state legislature, and the quicker the better as far as we're concerned."

She says it's time for Wisconsin to join the growing list of states that protect citizens from secondhand smoke.

"Wisconsin could join all of its neighbors, 25 states in total, and become the 26th to go smoke-free."

She says everyone has a right to breath clean air.

"We must give every worker in the state the right to a smoke-free workplace, including those who work in bars and restaurants, so that nobody has to choose between their health and their job."

Governor Jim Doyle has said he will sign the bill if it reaches his desk, even though he would like to see it take effect sooner. Doyle described as fair and equitable the compromise that set the date of implementation more than a year out.

The bill would allow established cigar bars and tobacco shops to allow smoking. Residents of assisted living facilities would also be allowed to smoke under the measure.

Smokers' rights groups say smoking is a personal choice that the government should stay out of.

Glen Gardner, Public News Service - WI

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