

OUR VIEW**Time for
smoke free
is now**

Earlier this week the Assembly Committee on Public Health held a hearing on **smoke-free** laws in Wisconsin. Similar legislation is stalled in the Senate, where the leadership wants to adopt legislation exempting small taverns from the rules until 2011.

As a matter of public health, public finances and public responsibility, it's time

**Public
health
is at stake**

Wisconsin adopted a **smoke-free** law that prohibits smoking in all public facilities and workplaces. No exceptions.

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.

And the argument that a **smoking ban** creates economic hardship is a boondoggle. Study after study done in communities and states that have enacted bans show no impact or a positive impact once smoking bans are in place. That includes blue collar Appleton.

It's time to get a strong, comprehensive **smoke-free** bill out of committees, and onto the governor's desk.