



For Immediate Release
Contact: Maureen Busalacchi
Executive Director – Smoke Free Wisconsin

Feb. 13, 2007
Phone: 608-335-0005

Health professionals applaud Wisconsin Restaurant Association's support of workplace smoking ban – "critical for public health"

MADISON - The Wisconsin Restaurant Association last week endorsed a statewide ban on smoking in all workplaces including restaurants and taverns, which is an extremely important step in protecting Wisconsin's public health, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association and SmokeFree Wisconsin said late Tuesday.

"This historic decision by Wisconsin's restaurants was in fact profound," said Maureen Busalacchi, executive director of Smoke Free Wisconsin. "Restaurant owners and their businesses are a strong part of Wisconsin's economy - and their support of smoke free workplaces is something the health community truly appreciates and lawmakers simply can't ignore."

"A statewide 100 percent smoke-free workplace law, as endorsed by Governor Doyle, is critical for public health," she said. "It is the only way to create a smoking ban that is fair to all businesses and protects everyone's right to breathe smoke free air."

"Having the restaurant association on board changes the discussion entirely," said Alison Prange, of the American Cancer Society. "The American Cancer Society applauds the courageous stand they've taken, and looks forward to working with them to remove second hand smoke from the workplace."

"WRA's stand in favor of the workplace smoking ban is monumental," said Jeff Ranous, senior director of advocacy for the American Heart Association in Wisconsin. "In essence, we all want the same thing -- a healthier Wisconsin for our kids and grand kids."

"This really shouldn't be a surprise," said Dona Wininsky, Director of Public Policy for the American Lung Association of Wisconsin. "Restaurant owners want a smoke free workplace for their employees too."

Statewide, second-hand smoke kills more than 800 people per year in Wisconsin, slightly more deaths than those created by traffic accidents. Smoking-related diseases from those

who smoke and those who breathe others' smoke kills nearly 8,000 people each year and is the leading cause of death in Wisconsin, according to state health statistics.