

# Ramsey County Residents Support Smoke-Free Multi-Housing

**“The science is clear: secondhand smoke is not a mere annoyance, but a serious health hazard that causes premature death and disease in children and nonsmoking adults.”**

*--Richard H. Carmona, M.D., U.S. Surgeon General, 2006*

## Survey Findings

### **An overwhelming majority of Ramsey County residents agree that secondhand smoke is harmful to adults and children.**

- Ninety-one percent (91%) of respondents agree that “secondhand smoke is harmful to adults.”
- Ninety-four percent (94%) of respondents agree that “secondhand smoke is harmful to children.”

### **Almost half of Ramsey County residents who live in apartments, condominiums, or townhouses reported secondhand smoke coming into their home from somewhere else in the building.**

- Forty-four percent (44%) of renters have been exposed to secondhand smoke drifting into their homes: “Very often” (15%) or “sometimes” (29%).
- Americans spend about 66% of their time in their homes,<sup>1</sup> and the home is where children are most exposed to secondhand smoke.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Environmental Protection Agency, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2006.

### **Ramsey County residents prefer to live in smoke-free buildings or homes.**

- Ninety percent (90%) of respondents said they “prefer to live in a smoke-free building or home.”
- The majority of respondents (78%) do not allow their guests to smoke in their home.
- Ramsey County respondents are highly likely to ask guests who begin smoking in their home to go outside.
- Eighty-five percent (85%) of Ramsey County residents agree that “smoke-free policies protect the rights of nonsmokers.”

## Policy Solutions

### **Smoke-free building policies protect all renters from the dangers of secondhand smoke.**

- Hundreds of apartment buildings across the United States have declared their buildings smoke free and incorporate this policy into their leases.
- Smoke-free policies are legal for all types of multi-housing.
- Smoke-free policies reduce cleaning costs, reduce risk of fire damage and death, and protect the health of renters.

These conclusions are based on the responses of 314 Ramsey County residents to a random sample mail survey conducted during the fall of 2005. The sample was selected using driver’s license data. The response rate was 45%, with a margin of error of  $\pm 6\%$ . This study was conducted by the University of Minnesota, School of Public Health and supported by ClearWay Minnesota<sup>SM</sup>. For more information on the survey, contact Jean Forster at [forst001@umn.edu](mailto:forst001@umn.edu) or (612) 626-8864. For assistance in creating smoke-free apartment buildings, contact Brittany McFadden at [bhm@ansrmn.org](mailto:bhm@ansrmn.org) or (651) 646-3005.

# **The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke:**

## **A Report of the Surgeon General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

### **Six Major Conclusions of the 2006 Surgeon General's Report**

Smoking is the single greatest avoidable cause of disease and death. In this report, *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*, the Surgeon General has concluded that:

- 1. Many millions of Americans, both children and adults, are still exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes and workplaces despite substantial progress in tobacco control.**
- 2. Secondhand smoke causes disease & premature death in children and adults who do not smoke.**
- 3. Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), acute respiratory infections, ear problems, and more severe asthma. Smoking by parents causes respiratory symptoms and slows lung growth in their children.**
- 4. Exposure of adults to secondhand smoke has immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and causes coronary heart disease and lung cancer.**
- 5. The scientific evidence indicates that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.**
- 6. Eliminating smoking in indoor spaces fully protects nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke. Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot eliminate exposures of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke.**

*The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General* was prepared by the Office on Smoking and Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Report was written by 22 national experts who were selected as primary authors. The Report chapters were reviewed by 40 peer reviewers, and the entire Report was reviewed by 30 independent scientists and by lead scientists within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services. Throughout the review process, the Report was revised to address reviewers' comments. To view the full report, visit:

[www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/)

#### **Citation**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006.



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