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Letter to the Editor

Natrona County Board of Health Position Statement on Comprehensive Smoking Ban

The Natrona County Board of Health is taking a position in favor of reinstating a comprehensive, smoking ban. The Board of Health's stance is based on overwhelming, public health evidence of the positive population-based health outcomes observed in communities that implement a comprehensive smoking ban in all workplaces.

- Comprehensive, smoking bans are evidence-based. A large body of medical literature exists supporting the positive health outcomes associated with comprehensive, smoking bans in a large variety of communities across the U.S. Positive health outcomes associated with these bans include reduction in acute coronary events (i.e., heart attacks and strokes), reduction in respiratory symptoms in adult and improvements in lung function, and substantial reductions in preterm births and asthma attacks in children. A comprehensive, smoking ban is good public health policy for Natrona County residents of all ages, including unborn children.
- Jurisdictions implementing comprehensive, smoking bans have found immediate protective effect towards a decrease in acute coronary events like heart attack and stroke, and saw that the protective effect strengthened over time. In sum, communities implementing comprehensive smoking bans saw immediate improvement in community health and community health continued to improve over months and years after the ban was put into place.
- Public smoking bans coupled with tobacco taxation are the most effective public health strategies for preventing hospitalizations for heart attacks and strokes at the population level.
- Public smoking bans change cultural norms and reduce opportunities for individuals who are not active smokers from ever picking up a cigarette. The impact of this is greatest in youth.
- Taxpayers bear the burden of the costs associated with negative health outcomes associated with smoking and second-hand smoke exposure.
- Everyone deserves the right to breathe clean, smoke-free air indoors.

A comprehensive, smoking ban benefits the entire Natrona County community as a whole and it's a clear win for evidence-based public health policy and practice.

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