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Note: Sound bites on this topic are available at: www.dhhs.ne.gov/audio

Celebrating Five Years of Clean Indoor Air in Nebraska

Lincoln – Breathe in...breathe out. Enjoy the fresh, clean air that makes life more pleasurable.

On June 1, Nebraska will celebrate five years of clean indoor air. The Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act was signed into law in 2008 and became effective on June 1, 2009. The law required every indoor workplace in Nebraska to be smoke-free, including restaurants, bars, keno establishments, and other workplaces (retail/office space, manufacturing, etc.) as well as indoor public places.

"Support for the law remains high at 86 percent," said Joseph M. Acierno, M.D., J.D., Director of the Division of Public Health and Chief Medical Officer for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). "According to the Nebraska Adult Tobacco Survey, 90 percent of non-smokers support the law, with smokers' support for the law increasing from 39 percent before the law went into effect in 2008 to 62 percent in 2012."

Compliance with the law has been high as well. Since the law went into effect there have only been 395 complaints through December 2013. Of those:

- 270 businesses were identified in the complaints, with 44 percent of the complaints regarding bars/restaurants.
- 129 complaints were reported in 2009 (the first year of the law).
- 27 complaints were reported in 2013.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke.

Any exposure to tobacco smoke – even an occasional cigarette or exposure to secondhand smoke – is harmful. Nebraska is one of 16 states with 100 percent smoke-free laws in all non-hospitality workplaces, restaurants, bars and gambling venues.

"Being smoke free is something we often take for granted in Nebraska these days," said Judy Martin, Deputy Director for Community and Environmental Health for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. "Visiting another state is often a stark reminder of how wonderful it is for all indoor workplaces and indoor public places to be smoke-free."

For more information about the law and Nebraska's successful transition to clean indoor air, visit SmokeFree.ne.gov.

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