

# Smoke-Free Policies: Protecting Everyone's Right to Breathe Clean Air

July 2025



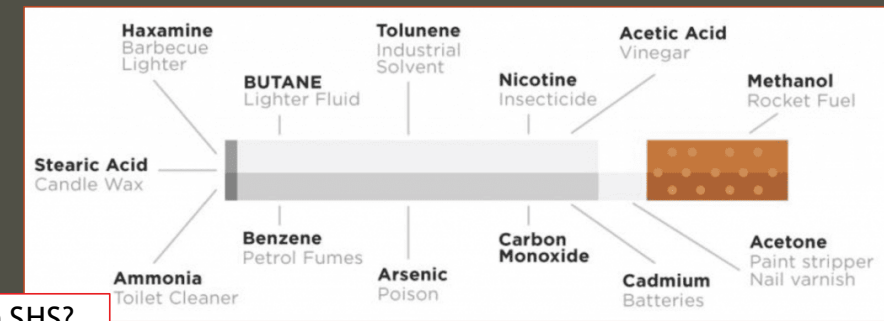
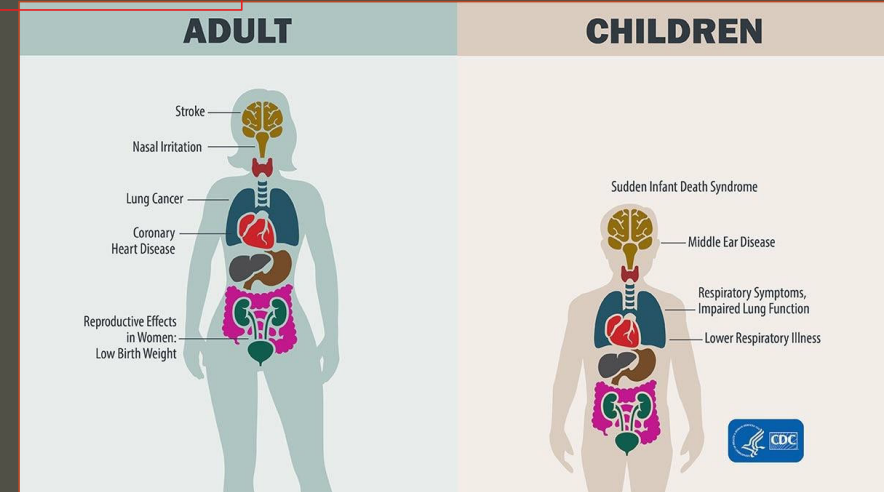
# Objectives of Presentation

- Detail the health harms caused by secondhand smoke and the need for smoke-free laws
- Illustrate widespread adoption, successful implementation, & popularity around the world
- Present evidence that comprehensive smoke-free laws work to save lives and health care dollars
- Demonstrate that smoke-free laws are good for business as well as health

## The Problem

- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death worldwide, killing over 8 million people annually, including **1.3 million deaths from secondhand smoke** (SHS).
- Secondhand smoke is a toxic mixture of more than 7,000 chemicals, including about 70 known carcinogens, and is a proven cause of cancer, stroke, heart disease, and other illness. There is no known safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Everyone deserves the right to breathe clean air in all workplaces and public places, free from the harms of secondhand smoke.

### Health Consequences linked to SHS exposure



What is in SHS?

Source: Brown University

# The Solution - Comprehensive Smoke-free Laws

**Article 8** of the WHO FCTC obligate Parties to enact and implement comprehensive smoke-free policies for all indoor public places.

When adopted and implemented effectively, comprehensive smoke-free laws always result in:

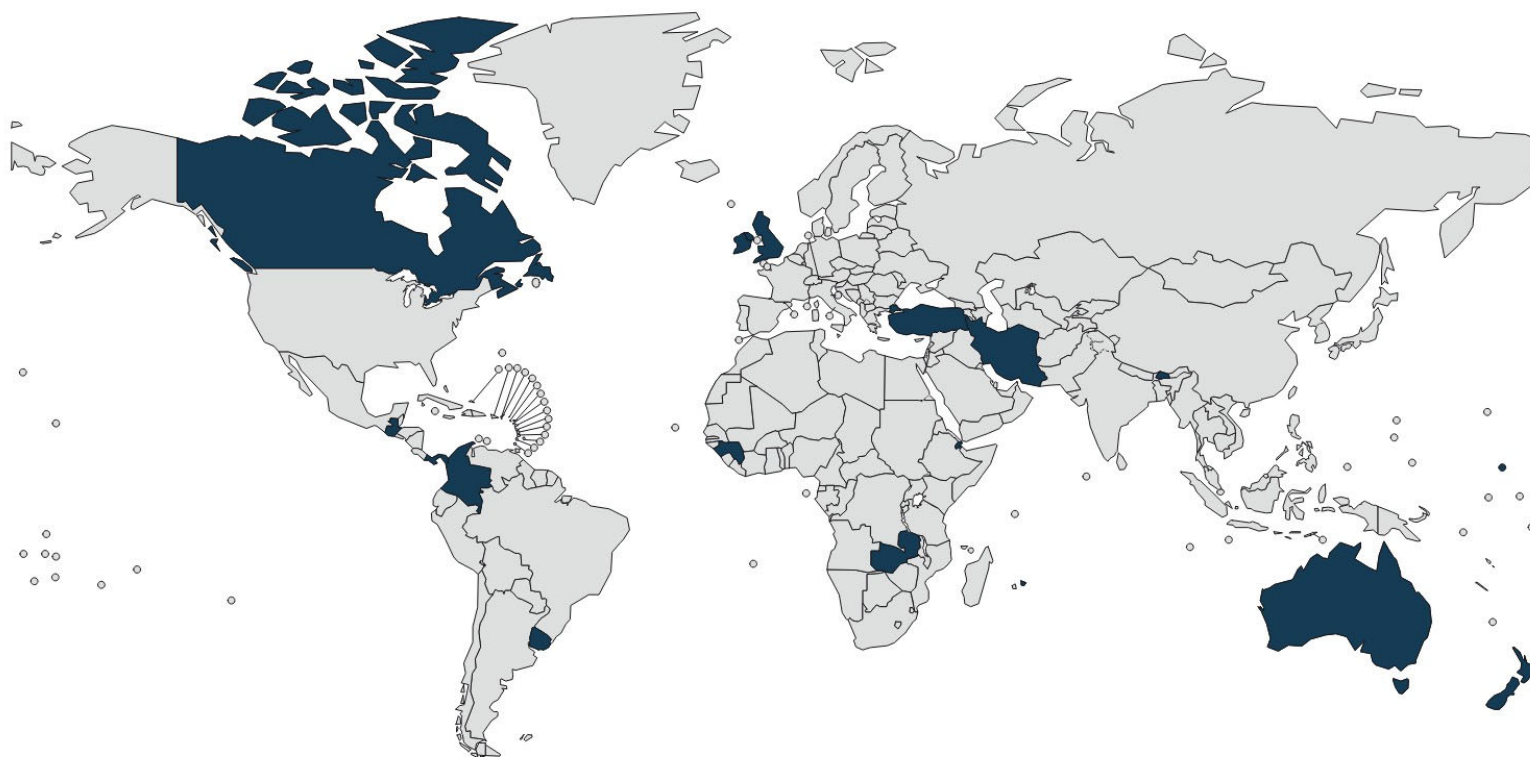
- Widespread adoption globally
- High compliance
- Dramatically cleaner and healthier air
- Healthier patrons and workers and reduced health care costs
- Reduced smoking rates due to:
  - More smokers wanting and trying to quit - and succeeding
  - Fewer kids starting to smoke due to social norm change
- A healthy business environment - in the hospitality industry and elsewhere
- Broad popular support

# Widespread Adoption

Since Ireland became first smoke-free country in 2004, 78 additional countries have adopted WHO FCTC compliant smoke-free laws, protecting roughly 2.6 billion people from secondhand smoke worldwide.

However, with 5.5 billion people still left unprotected by national laws, cities play a critical role by adopting these life-saving laws to protect their citizens from secondhand smoke and encourage national adoption of these laws

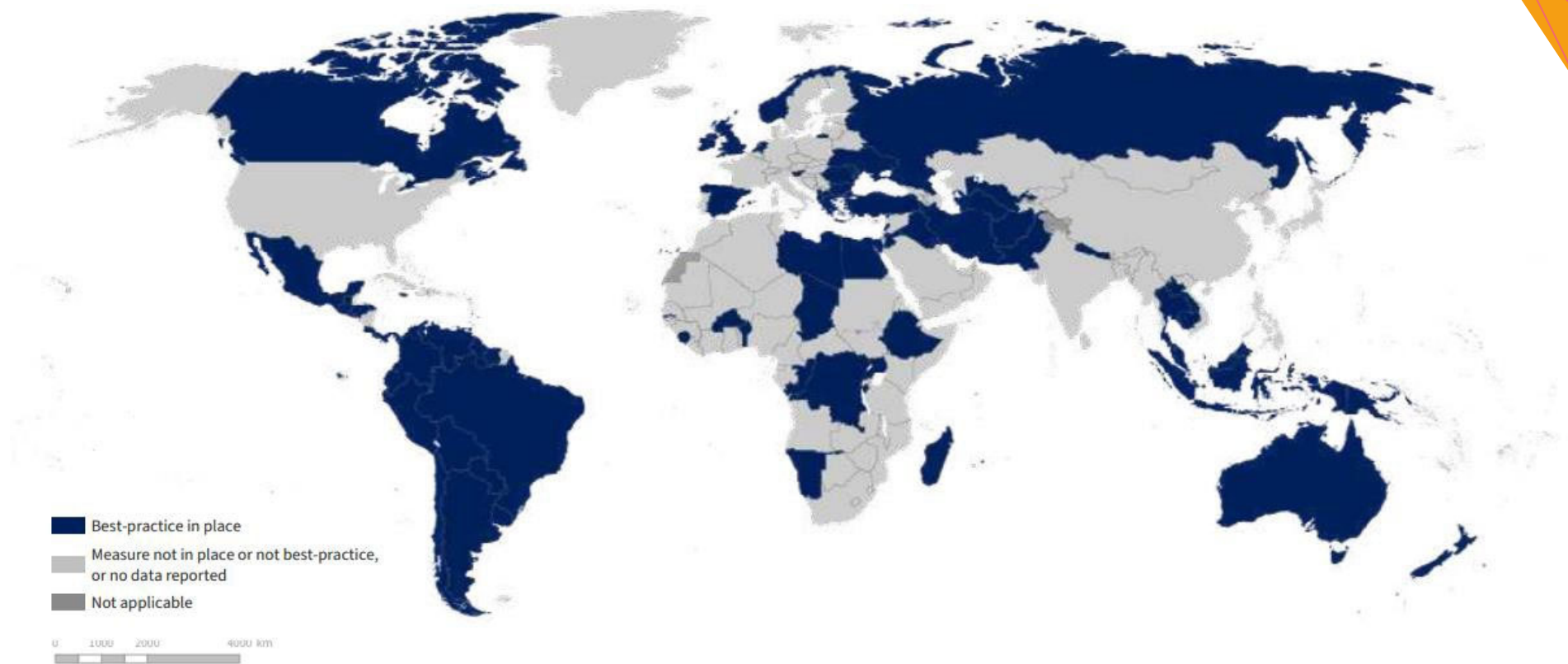




Smoke-free environments, highest achieving countries and territories, 2008

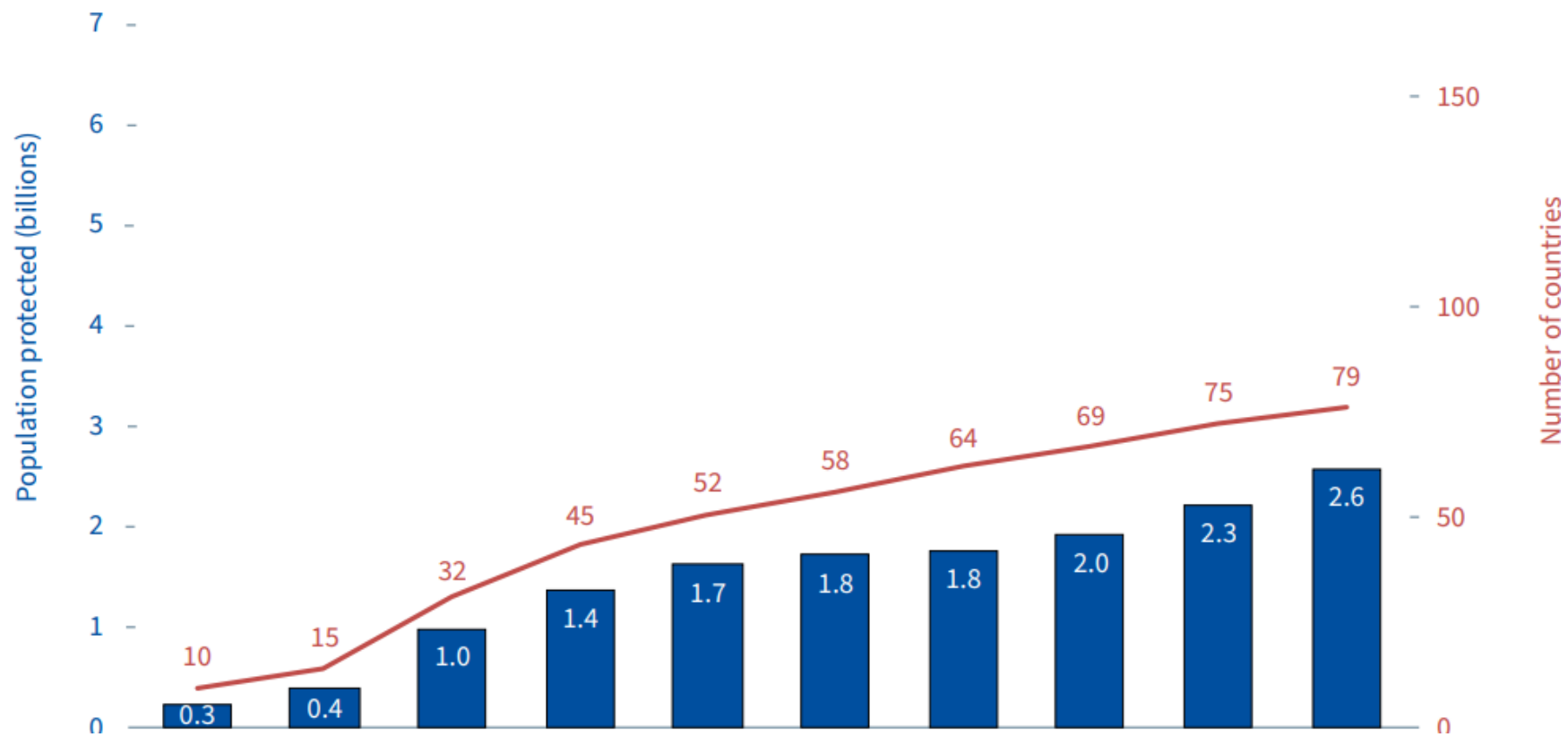
Source: WHO MPOWER Report 2009





## Smoke-free environments, highest achieving countries and territory, 2024

Source: WHO MPOWER Report 2025



Progress in smoke-free legislation (2007-2024)

Source: WHO MPOWER Report 2025



## Key Takeaway #1 Compliance is high when properly implemented and enforced

- Studies in various countries show that when comprehensive smoke-free laws are properly implemented and enforced, compliance is high and sustained.

The first country to pass a comprehensive, national smoke-free law, compliance levels in Ireland were at 95% a year after implementation.<sup>1</sup>



In the city of Xining, two years after significant legislative revisions and enhancements to their SF law in 2021, compliance ranged from 65.2% to 100% by venue type.<sup>3</sup>



One year after passing a comprehensive smoke-free law, compliance in New York State, 97% of bars and restaurants complied.<sup>2</sup>

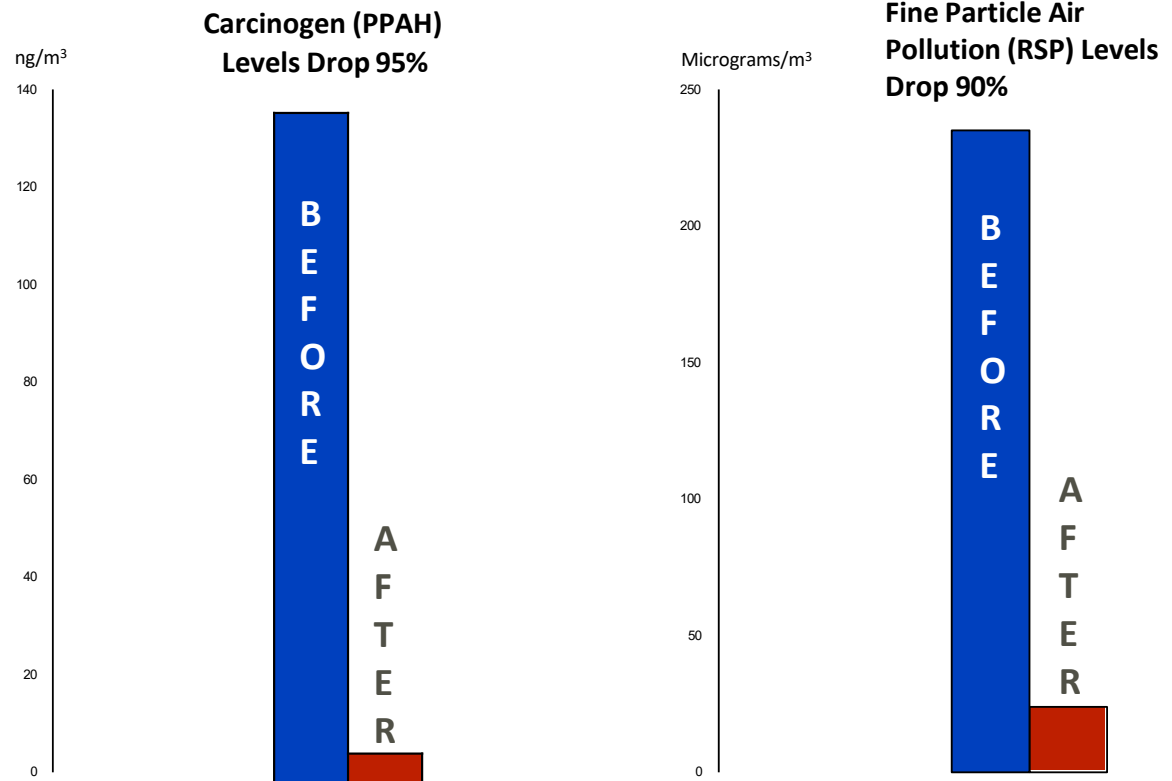


## Key Takeaway #2

### **Air becomes cleaner and healthier quickly**

- Studies have shown that implementing smoke-free laws results in reduced exposure to the harms of secondhand smoke in a short period of time.

## Delaware smoke-free Law Clears The Air



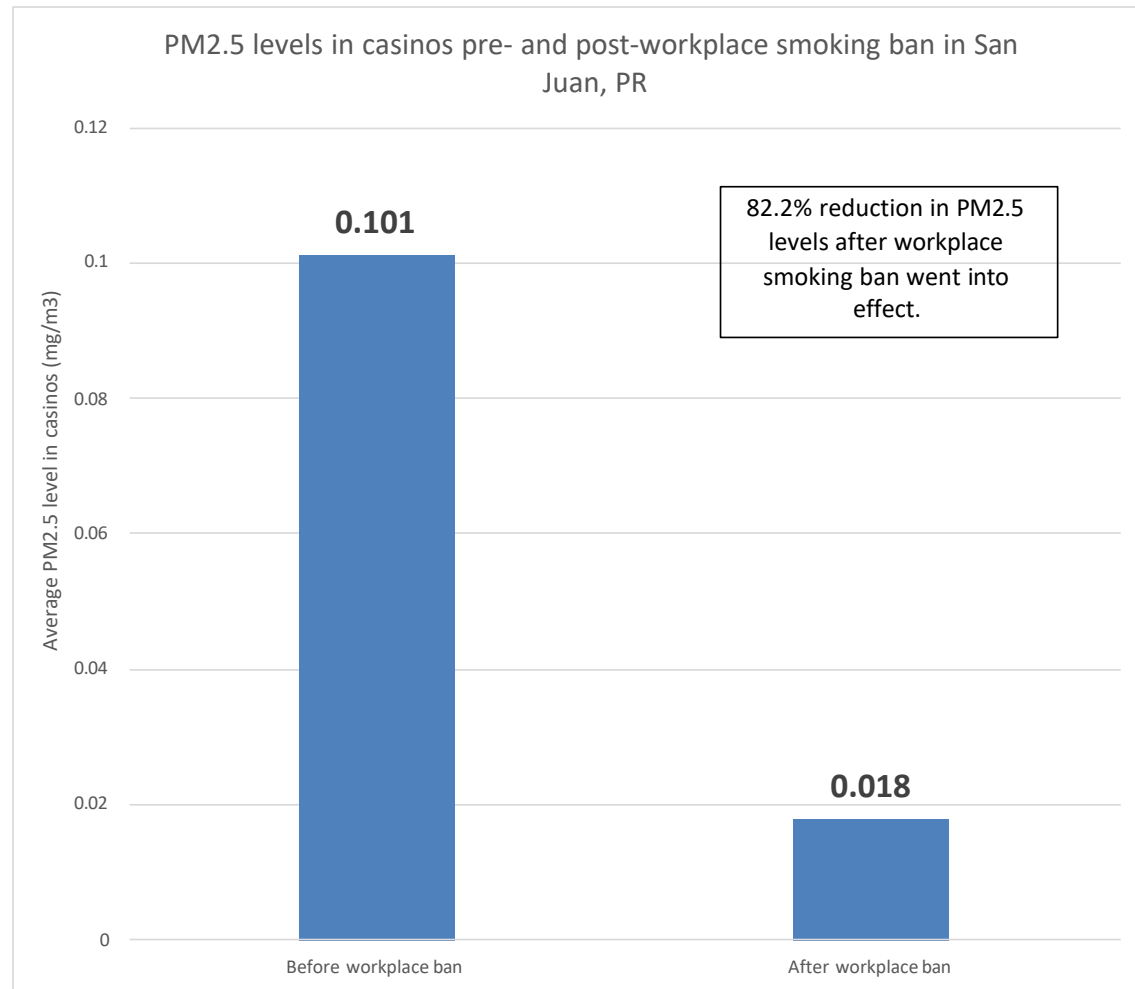
Indoor air quality test conducted Nov. 15, 2002 and Jan. 24, 2003 to assess levels of air pollution before and after DE Clean

Indoor Air Law went into effect. One casino, 5 restaurants with bars, one taproom and one pool hall were tested

## Key Takeaway #2

### **Air becomes cleaner and healthier quickly**

- Studies have shown that implementing smoke-free laws results in reduced exposure to the harms of secondhand smoke in a short period of time.

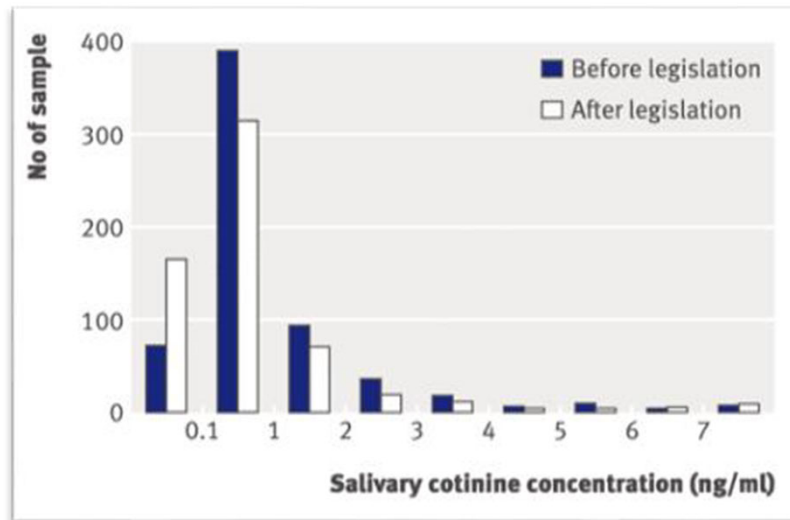
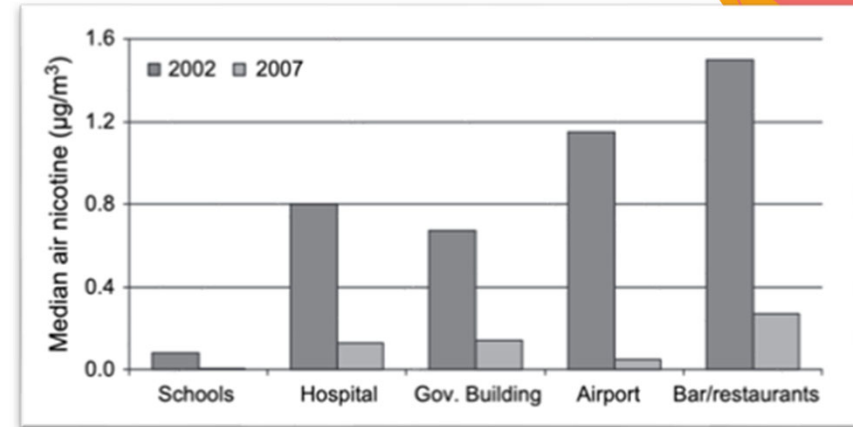


## Key Takeaway #2

### **Air becomes cleaner and healthier quickly**

- Studies have shown that implementing smoke-free laws results in reduced exposure to the harms of secondhand smoke in a short period of time.

Median air nicotine concentrations in public places in **Montevideo, Uruguay**, significantly decreased after the implementation of comprehensive smoke-free legislation in March 2006.<sup>1</sup>



Cotinine concentrations (a biomarker for nicotine exposure) significantly decreased in non-smokers after smoke-free legislation in **Scotland**.<sup>2</sup>

### Key Takeaway #3

## **Worker health improves with reduced exposure**

- Studies show SF laws improve health outcomes among workers.

A study (2007) conducted in **Scotland** after implementing their national smoke-free law found rapid (within 2 months) improvements in several health outcomes in **non-smoking bar workers**, including: <sup>1</sup>

- Reductions in respiratory symptoms
- Reductions in sensory symptoms (e.g. eye and throat irritations)
- Improvements in lung function
- Reductions in inflammation or swelling of airways
- Improved quality of life among bar employees with asthma



Key Takeaway #3

**Public health improves with reduced exposure**

- Studies show SF laws improve health outcomes among the general public.

A meta-analysis (2012) of 45 studies of 33 smoke-free laws found that such laws were associated with lower rates of hospital admissions or deaths for: **coronary events, other heart disease, cerebrovascular accidents, and respiratory disease.**<sup>1</sup>



A study (2007) conducted in the **United States** found that smoke-free laws were significantly associated with **lower odds of asthmatic symptoms** and associated with a decrease in **asthma attacks** and **emergency-department visits for asthma** among non-smoking youth.<sup>2</sup>

Key Takeaway #3  
**Public health  
improves with  
reduced exposure**



A meta-analysis (2010) of 17 studies of the effect of smoke-free laws on acute coronary events reported **a reduction in acute coronary events** following the implementation of smoke-free laws, with the effect increasing over time.<sup>1</sup>

A Cochrane review (2010) of 12 studies found evidence of a significant **reduction in hospital admissions for cardiac events** following implementation of smoke-free laws.<sup>2</sup>



Key Takeaway #3  
**Public health  
improves with  
reduced exposure**



A recent meta-analysis (2024) found that smoke-free laws were significantly associated with reductions in the rates of hospital admissions for **stroke**.<sup>1</sup>

### Key Takeaway #3

**Public health improves with reduced exposure**



A study in **Kentucky State** (2022) found that pregnant persons living in counties with comprehensive laws were **9% less likely to have a preterm birth** than those living in counties without a smoke-free ordinance.<sup>1</sup>

A study **in England** (2015) found that smoke-free laws were associated with clinically important reductions in severe adverse perinatal outcomes such as **stillbirths, low birth weight, and neonatal deaths**.<sup>2</sup>

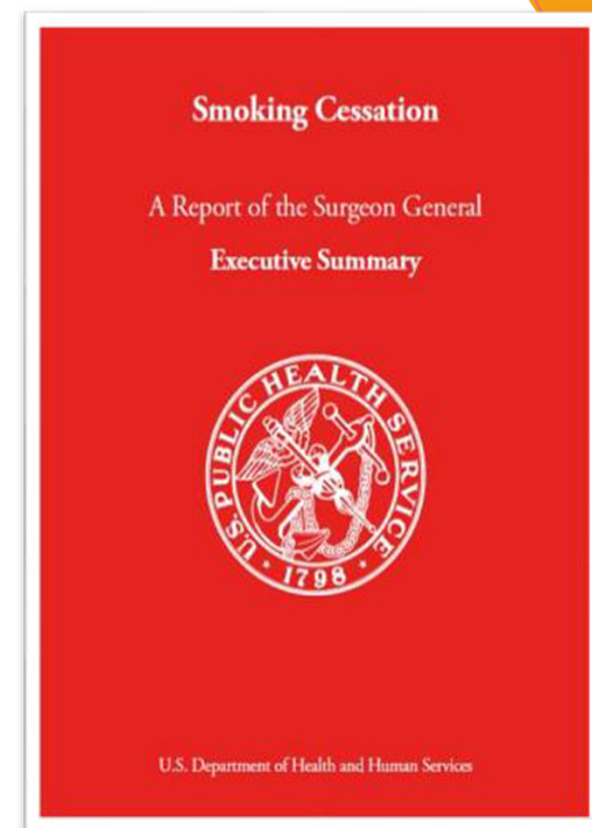
A meta-analysis (2023) of 144 population-level studies found smoke-free legislation was associated with **beneficial birth outcomes**.<sup>3</sup>

#### Key Takeaway #4

**Encourage smokers to quit and helps them to succeed**; reduces social acceptability that discourages kids from starting to smoke

- Comprehensive smoke-free laws also improve public health by helping smokers quit or reduce their consumption.

The 2020 U.S Surgeon General report, *Smoking Cessation*, found that there is sufficient evidence “to infer that **smoke-free policies reduce smoking prevalence, reduce cigarette consumption, and increase smoking cessation.**”<sup>1</sup>

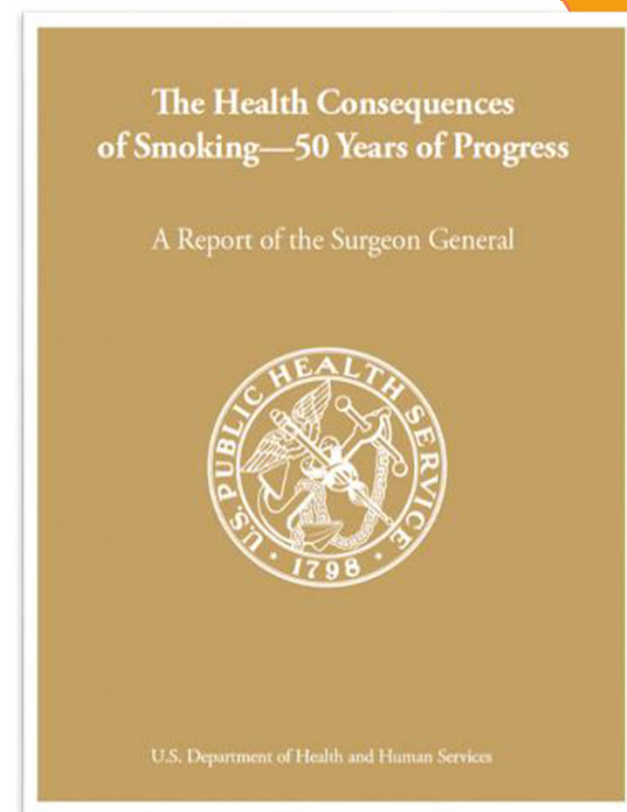


#### Key Takeaway #4

**Encourage smokers to quit and helps them to succeed;** reduces social acceptability that discourages kids from starting to smoke

- Comprehensive smoke-free laws also improve public health by preventing youth from taking up smoking and making smoking less socially acceptable.

The **2014 Surgeon General's Report**, *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress*, found that, "A growing body of evidence suggests that these [smoke-free] policies have the additional benefit of lowering smoking rates among youth and young adults. There are several pathways for this effect including lower visibility of role models who smoke, fewer opportunities to smoke alone or with others, and **diminished social acceptability** and social advantage for smoking."<sup>1</sup>



## Key Takeaway #5

### Good for businesses and the economy

- Studies have shown that SF laws mitigate the healthcare costs and lost productivity associated with SHS exposure.

In rural **China**, the total direct healthcare costs attributed to secondhand smoke exposure amounts to **US\$1.2 billion** in 2015.<sup>1</sup>

In **Taiwan**, the total direct and indirect costs of secondhand smoke exposure was **US\$126 million** in 2010.<sup>2</sup>

A **multi-country study** found that across the seven countries included in the study, smokers consistently had **higher rates of absenteeism** at work compared to former smokers and never smokers.<sup>3</sup>

One study in the U.S. estimated the total societal net benefits from a national smoke-free law to be between **\$42 billion and \$78 billion** per year.<sup>4</sup>

## Key Takeaway #5

### Good for businesses and the economy

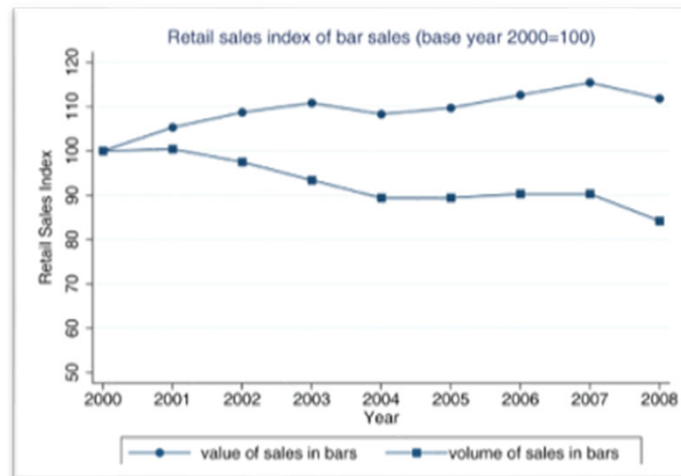
- Studies have consistently shown that SF laws have no negative economic impact on the hospitality industry.

A study in El Paso, TX found that **no statistically significant changes in restaurant and bar revenues** occurred after the smoking ban took effect.<sup>1</sup>

FIGURE 1. Restaurant, bar, and mixed-beverage\* revenues, before and after implementation of smoking ban, by quarter — El Paso, Texas, 1990–2002



\* Mixed-beverage revenue data were available only for 1995–2002.



A 2014 **meta-analysis of 39 studies conducted around the world** examined the economic impacts of smoking bans on bars and restaurants, finding there were **no substantial changes to employment or sales for the hospitality industry** overall following implementation and that restaurants experienced small economic gains.<sup>2</sup>

Key Takeaway #5

## Good for businesses and the economy

### Before the law

James McBratney, president of the Staten Island Restaurant and Tavern Association.

"The crystal ball that people are looking at to project economic stability is not good enough for me."

October 11, 2002  
*New York Daily News*

### After the law

## The New York Times

### As Air Clears, Even Smokers Are Converted

February 6, 2005  
By JIM RUTENBERG and LILY KOPPEL

**B**ack in 2002, when the City Council was weighing Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's proposal to eliminate smoking from all indoor public places, few opponents were more fiercely outspoken than James McBratney, president of the Staten Island Restaurant and Tavern Association.

He frequently ripped Mr. Bloomberg as a billionaire dictator with a prohibitionist streak that would undo small businesses like his bar and his restaurant. Visions of customers streaming to the legally smoke-filled pubs of New Jersey kept him awake at night.

**Asked last week what he thought of the now two-year-old ban, Mr. McBratney sounded changed. "I have to admit," he said sheepishly, "I've seen no falloff in business in either establishment." He went on to describe what he once considered unimaginable: Customers actually seem to like it, and so does he.**

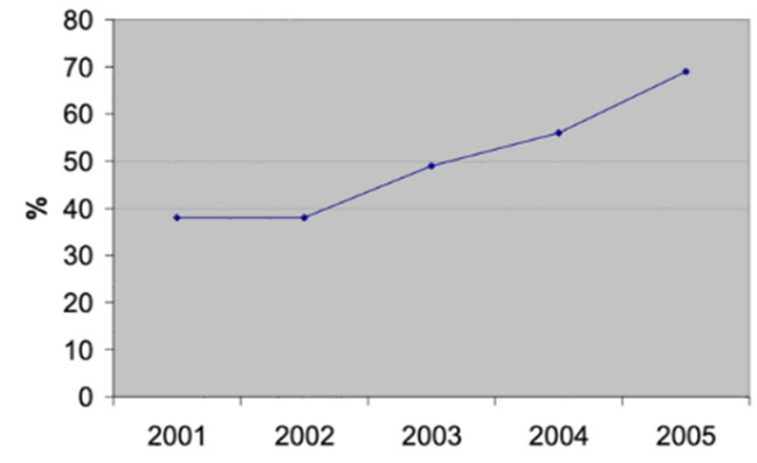


## Key Takeaway #6

### Smoke-free laws are popular with the public

- Comprehensive smoke-free laws receive widespread public support where implemented.

A study in **New Zealand** found that 56% of people believed venues (bars and restaurants) should be smoke-free 1 month before the national comprehensive law took effect, but **69%** **believed** venue should be smoke-free 4 months after law took effect.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1**  
**Public support for completely smokefree pubs and bars.** National survey data from UMR Research Ltd [26].

A review of several waves of the **New York** Adult Tobacco Survey found that 64% of all adults supported the comprehensive smoke-free law shortly before the law took effect, while **80%** **supported** it two years after implementation.<sup>2</sup>

## Key Takeaway #6

### **Smoke-free laws are popular with the public**

- Comprehensive smoke-free laws receive widespread public support where implemented.

**“Governments should be reassured that public support for smoke-free measures is high.** A recent systematic review of data from 33 countries demonstrates that support for smoke-free environments is generally high.”<sup>3</sup>

# Tips for Implementation

from WHO's *Making Cities Smoke-free*

1. Simple, clear, enforceable and comprehensive legislation
2. Anticipation and countering of the opposition
3. Good planning and adequate resources to maximize compliance with the law
4. Civil society involvement
5. Outreach and communications
6. Monitoring and evaluation of implementation and impact