

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Contact:**

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**Wisconsin Celebrates 6th Anniversary of Smoke-Free Air Law**

**EAU CLAIRE, WI, July 5, 2016-** Today marks yet another year of smoke-free air in Wisconsin. The smoke-free air law took effect July 5, 2010. Before smoke-free laws, many individuals, families, workers and customers were exposed to second-hand smoke in public places. For the last six years, residents have enjoyed healthier environments with cleaner air; and businesses continue to thrive with healthier employees and customers.

The law has helped re-shape social norms around smoking. Kids aren't seeing what they used to see. We no longer have to choose between the "smoking" and "non-smoking" section. People are no longer smoking at work, at restaurants, and at other public places where youth and family socializing is common. Thanks to Wisconsin lawmakers, we can all breathe a little easier.



While the smoke-free law was a huge win for the state, challenges still remain. From local survey data, we know that the percentage of youth using tobacco products has decreased; however, the use of e-cigarettes and other tobacco products is on the rise. This is especially true among young people. The 2015 national Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicates that among U.S. high school students, 1 in 10 students reported smoking cigarettes within the past 30 days, and 1 in 4 students reported using electronic cigarettes within the past 30 days.

"A number of steps to reduce smoking in Wisconsin have been taken. Yet, we still need to prevent youth from starting to use and continue to help current users quit," says Rachael Manning, Health Educator at the Eau Claire City-County Health Department. "Nearly all tobacco use starts during youth or young adulthood, so prevention is critical."

In Eau Claire County, the Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention and the Health Department conduct compliance checks through the *WI Wins* program to prevent youth tobacco use. *WI Wins* is part of the state-wide tobacco prevention and control program. This program uses a mix of education and oversight to keep tobacco out of the hands of youth. In addition to compliance checks, other tobacco prevention activities happening in our community include:

- Free retailer training and educational resources – such as SmokeCheck.org
- Community outreach and education
- Strong tobacco-free policies that include e-cigarettes, and
- Smoke-free building ordinances.



A smoke-free Wisconsin will lower health care costs, save lives, and help make residents healthier. Wisconsin truly is better with smoke-free air. *Tobacco users who are ready to quit can call the WI tobacco quit line at (1-800-QUIT-NOW) for free and confidential help.*

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