



(January 27, 2011)

Dear Editor,

I am writing to encourage your readers to support smokefree air in Mississippi.

Every year, hundreds of Mississippians die from exposure to secondhand smoke. The facts are clear: there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke has immediate adverse effects on the human body. When inhaling secondhand cigarette smoke, individuals breathe in more than 7,000 chemicals, hundreds of which can cause cancer. Secondhand smoke causes heart disease and lung cancer in adults. Children breathe faster than adults and are twice as likely to be affected by exposure to secondhand smoke. They are at an increased risk for sudden infant death syndrome, ear problems and more severe asthma.

Smokefree Air Mississippi is an initiative led by the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) to educate Mississippians on the very real dangers of exposure to secondhand smoke. This initiative is currently taking place through local grassroots efforts and a statewide media campaign that includes television, cinema, newspapers, radio, website, Facebook, Twitter and sports marketing with Mississippi's public universities.

I support the *Smokefree Air Mississippi* initiative and I encourage my legislators and all Mississippians to do the same. Please visit www.SmokefreeAirMS.com today to sign the petition of support and to find out more ways you can make your voice heard.

My hope is that one day very soon all Mississippians will be protected from exposure to secondhand smoke in all public places and workplaces. No Mississippian should be forced to choose between their health and a paycheck. Everyone deserves to breathe smokefree air.

Sincerely,

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