

ALLEGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Informational News Release

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Study Indicates High Compliance with Smoke-Free Air Law

(Allegan, MI) Researchers with the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) Tobacco Section recently completed analysis of results from an observational compliance check survey related to Michigan's statewide smoke-free air law. The survey was conducted during August 2010 to determine compliance of businesses with the law three months after implementation. The law, which took effect May 1, 2010, requires Michigan workplaces to be smoke-free.

The eleven question survey included observations on whether "no smoking" signs were posted, if ashtrays and/or smoking paraphernalia were visible, whether smoking was permitted in the waiting area, outdoor seating area, or anywhere in the venue, and whether business managers, when appropriate, asked smokers to refrain from smoking. Information identifying the venue and the date and time of the observation was also collected.

The survey, which was completed by volunteers age 21 or older in 59 of Michigan's 83 counties, was conducted at 964 randomly selected restaurants, bars, and bowling alleys. The observations were recorded unobtrusively within the selected venues. Allegan County Health Department was one of the agencies that worked with volunteers to complete the survey.

Statewide, 85% of surveyed establishments had visibly posted "no smoking" signs and nearly 96% of these establishments had removed ashtrays and smoking paraphernalia. Smoking was observed in 11% of outdoor seating areas and in 5% of waiting areas. There was no smoking observed at all in over 95% of the surveyed establishments. Allegan County Health Department reported that 100% of establishments had posted "no smoking" signs, and 100% of establishments were completely smoke-free." These results were higher than the state average. Moreover, Allegan County's establishments are reporting an increase patronizing of "families because of no smoking".

According to Jean Chabut, Deputy Director of Public Health Administration, "Overall, the survey indicates that compliance with the law is high. Business owners and patrons are following the requirements of the law, and as a result Michigan workers are protected from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke exposure."

The observational compliance check survey was conducted for a second time in December 2010 - with results to be released soon, and will be conducted a third time in May 2011. To review Allegan County's report, go to <http://www.allegancounty.org>

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