



Legislative Update

January 28, 2009

Please read and forward to your colleagues and networks!

2009 General Assembly Session Begins Today;

Smoke-free Worksites and Public Places Bill to be Introduced

The 2009 session of the General Assembly convenes on Wednesday, January 28. Given the multiple media reports of the decrease in state revenues and the large state budget deficit due to the faltering economy in our state, it is no surprise that tough decisions await NC lawmakers.

Efforts to make all worksites and public places smoke-free are expected to receive a great deal of attention throughout the session. House Majority Leader Hugh Holliman (D-Davidson) is expected to introduce a statewide, comprehensive smoke-free bill on the opening day of session as a sign of the bill's high priority.

Passing a statewide, comprehensive smoke-free bill that also restores local control is one of the highest priorities of the NC Alliance for Health in 2009. Every year secondhand smoke causes an estimated 35,000 deaths nationwide. In North Carolina, more than 1,600 non-smokers die each year from other people's smoke. Twenty-four states and Washington, D.C., as well as hundreds of cities across the country, have passed legislation to protect their residents from the toxins in secondhand smoke. It's time for North Carolina to join these communities by putting public health first.

This session will also see the Alliance move proactively to promote several policy change efforts to address North Carolina's growing obesity epidemic. It promises to be an active session with both tobacco and obesity policy efforts and we will need YOUR help to make sure legislators know of the broad public support for these policy changes.

NC Alliance for Health 2009 Policy Priority Highlights

2009 Tobacco-Use Prevention Policy Priorities:

- Make all North Carolina worksites and public places 100% smoke-free and restore local control so that local governments may do more to regulate secondhand smoke if they chose.

- Support an increase in North Carolina's cigarette excise tax BY \$1.00.

2008 Obesity Prevention Policy Priorities:

- Establish guidelines and implement a five-year, fully-funded phase-in of quality physical education in NC schools by 2013, including 150 minutes weekly of elementary school physical education, 225 minutes weekly of "Healthful Living" in middle schools, and two units of "Healthful Living" as a graduation requirement for high schools.
- Implement and fully fund Child Nutrition Standards for grades K – 5.
- Promote the ability of local communities to support routine physical activity and healthy eating through built environment supports, including multi-modal transportation infrastructure (eg. mass transit, sidewalks, bike lanes), recreation opportunities (eg. parks, trails greenways), and food venues (eg. grocery stores, farmers' markets, community gardens).

For a more complete listing and explanation of the Alliance's 2009 policy priorities, go to <http://www.ncallianceforhealth.org/priorityissues.html>.

Up-Coming Events at the General Assembly

There will be ample opportunity this session to communicate with your lawmakers both online or in person at the Legislature. Listed below are key advocacy days in which the smoke-free issue will be a focus.

February 11: Legislative Heart Health Day at the General Assembly
Sponsored by the Justus Warren Heart Disease and Stroke Task Force

March 3: American Heart Association Lobby Day
You're the Cure for Smoke-free NC Hearts to be presented to lawmakers.
For more information, contact Betsy Vetter at betsy.vetter@heart.org.

SAVE THE DATE:

March 24: NC Alliance for Health Smoke-free Day at the General Assembly
More information to come or contact Alliance Executive Director Lisa Familo at lisa.familo@ncallianceforhealth.org

Alliance Built Environments Committee Meeting Announcement

The Alliance Built Environments Committee will meet Friday, February 13 from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the offices of the American Heart Association (AHA). The committee will continue discussing the Alliance Built Environments mission and goals and promotion of the intermodal tax proposal during the 2009 legislative session. Additional questions about this committee should be forwarded to committee chair Sig Hutchinson at Sig@SigHutchinson.com.

What *MORE* can you do to promote the secondhand smoke issue?

Visit the Alliance's website dedicated to making all worksites and public places smoke-free in NC. Simply point and click to send a message to your legislators.

www.smokefreenc.org

Have your organization, its board members, staff and volunteers sign the Alliance's secondhand smoke resolution to demonstrate your support for making North Carolina's worksites and public places smoke-free. Access the resolution by going to the Alliance's website at:

<http://www.ncallianceforhealth.org/resolution.html>

Also available on our website are fact sheets, talking points and other resources on secondhand smoke, the cigarette tax and NCAH obesity policy priorities.

For additional information about the North Carolina Alliance for Health, please contact Alliance Executive Director Lisa Familo at lisa.familo@ncallianceforhealth.org; or Alliance Policy Director Pam Seamans at pamseamans@nc.rr.com.

Or, go to www.ncallianceforhealth.org for talking points and other resources.

**Call 919-463-8328
or e-mail ncalliance@heart.org for more information**

To unsubscribe from this list serve please contact Lisa Familo, lisa.familo@ncallianceforhealth.org