

RESOLUTION  
OF THE  
TENNESSEE PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION  
REGARDING  
SMOKING IN VEHICLES WITH CHILDREN

WHEREAS, The 2006 Surgeon General's Report states that the scientific evidence about the dangers of secondhand smoke is indisputable; there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke; and,

WHEREAS, Almost 60 percent of U.S. children aged 3-11 years, or almost 22 million children are exposed to secondhand smoke; and,

WHEREAS, There is overwhelming evidence of the harms associated with exposure to secondhand smoke that is specific to children and specific to enclosed environments; and,

WHEREAS, American Academy of Pediatrics studies "provide evidence that exposure to environmental tobacco smoke is associated with increased rates of lower respiratory illness and increased rates of middle ear effusion, asthma and sudden infant death syndrome"; and,

WHEREAS, The American Academy of Pediatrics concludes "exposure during childhood to environmental tobacco smoke may also be associated with development of cancer during adulthood"; and,

WHEREAS, A 2006 Harvard School of Public Health study found "alarming" levels of secondhand smoke were generated in just five minutes in vehicles under various driving, ventilation and smoking conditions; and,

WHEREAS, The same Harvard study found a "significant increase" in the levels of carbon monoxide in cars where smoking occurs, a substance known to induce lethargy and loss of alertness even in small quantities; and,

WHEREAS, Smoking just one cigarette in a vehicle raises fine particle levels far beyond exposure limits set by the EPA and raises secondhand smoke levels several times higher than levels found in bars and other establishments where smoking is allowed; and,

WHEREAS, A University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health found that 60 percent of current smokers would support a ban on smoking in cars carrying children, compared with 84 percent of former smokers and 87 percent of people who never smoked; and,

WHEREAS, At least six states including Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Maine, Oregon and Utah have smoke-free car laws banning smoking in cars where children are present, protecting children ranging from less than 6 years old to less than 18 years old; and,

WHEREAS, Tennessee maintains a robust child restraint law requiring all children under the age of nine and under 4 feet 9 inches tall to be restrained in either a booster seat or some other child safety restraint system;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Tennessee Public Health Association strongly recommends we work with the Tennessee General Assembly to protect our children from the dangers of secondhand smoke in cars by enacting legislation banning smoking in any car where a child should be restrained by a child safety restraint system; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be furnished to members of the Tennessee General Assembly and that a copy of this resolution be spread upon the minutes of the Association.

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Paula Masters  
President

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Doris G. Spain  
Executive Director

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Glenn Czarnecki  
Chair, Resolution Committee