

Study finds smoke-free laws don't impact rural or urban economies

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In a recent study published in *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*, Ellen Hahn, professor in the University of Kentucky College of Nursing and Mark Pyles, assistant professor of finance in the School of Business at the College of Charleston, found smoke-free legislation does not negatively influence local economies in either rural or urban communities. This is true regardless of whether the law is enacted at the state or local level.

The report, "[Economic Effects](#) of Smoke-free Laws on Rural and Urban Counties in Kentucky and Ohio," documents the number of employees, total wages paid and number of reporting establishments in all hospitality and accommodation services in Kentucky and Ohio counties beginning with the first quarter of 2001 and ending with the last quarter of 2009. The primary purpose of the study was to examine potential differential impact of smoke-free laws in rural and urban communities since some studies find that smoking prevalence differs in rural versus urban settings with most finding a higher prevalence in rural communities.

"Smoke-free laws are a known public health vaccine, protecting workers and the public from deadly heart and [asthma attacks](#)," according to Ellen Hahn, the study's co-author. "Our study shows that smoke-free laws are good for business, regardless of whether the business is located in a rural or an urban community, or if it is located in a place with a statewide smoke-free law or in a city or county with a local policy."

In April 2009, Lexington-Fayette County implemented the first smoke-free ordinance in Kentucky. Since that time, 30 additional Kentucky counties have enacted smoke-free city or county laws or Board of Health regulations. In 2010, a bill was filed in the Kentucky General Assembly to prohibit smoking in all workplaces and public places, but it was not called for a vote. The state of Ohio implemented a smoke-free law in November

2006 covering all workplaces, restaurants and bars in all areas of the state.

According to the Americans for Nonsmokers Rights Foundation, as of July 1, 2011, approximately 48 percent of the U.S. population was protected by local or statewide smoke-free laws that cover virtually all indoor worksites including bars and restaurants. Twenty-three states, along with Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C., and 468 municipalities have comprehensive smoke-free legislation covering all workplaces, restaurants and bars.

Provided by University of Kentucky

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