

Board of Health

For Release
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**DEKALB COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH RECOMMENDS
100% SMOKE-FREE ORDINANCE**

DECATUR, GA - On April 21, the DeKalb County Board of Health voted to amend DeKalb County's Clean Indoor Air Ordinance, making the county's businesses, parks and facilities 100% smoke-free.

The amended ordinance has been sent to the Board of Commissioners for their consideration and adoption.

The current ordinance allows smoking at free-standing bars, adult entertainment establishments and outdoor venues, including parks. The proposed amendment now bans smoking in these places and a number of others, such as playgrounds, entrances and exits to buildings, outdoor entertainment venues and outdoor service lines, such as the line at an ATM. The proposal also decreases the number of rooms a hotel can designate for smoking from 25 percent to 10 percent.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that tobacco use, particularly smoking which can lead to cancer, is one of the leading preventable causes of death in the United States. Eliminating smoking in public places has been proven to reduce the number of tobacco-related illnesses and deaths, which number more than 11,000 each year in Georgia. Smoking bans in places of employment have also been shown to lower maintenance expenses related to cleaning and insurance premiums including medical and fire.

According to the Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Tobacco use, there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Exposure to secondhand smoke contributes to severe health problems in both smokers and non-smokers, including cancer, emphysema, heart disease, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and asthma.

Dr. S. Elizabeth Ford, M.B.A., District Health Director of the Board of Health, said for every argument of lost revenues for businesses impacted by the proposed amendment, she has data from other cities that have passed 100% smoke-free policies with little reduction in revenues.

(more)

DeKalb County Board of Health

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**DEKALB COUNTY BOARD RECOMMENDS AMENDMENT
TO CLEAN INDOOR AIR ORDINANCE**

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- In California, taxable sales receipts for bars and restaurants have increased every year since their smoking ban took effect in 2002. Total employment in bars and restaurants has also increased every year.
- In Florida, one year after the 2003 smoke-free law made all public places and restaurants 100% smoke-free, restaurant sales were up 7 percent.

“We are concerned about the health of employees who work in establishments where smoking is allowed,” adds Dr. Ford. “Your health, while working on a job, should not be compromised because people around you are permitted to smoke.”

If the Board of Commissioners approves the Board of Health’s recommended amendment, DeKalb County would join several other areas in metro Atlanta that have banned outdoor smoking.

Roswell passed a smoking ban for its 18 municipal parks last summer. Marietta's 19 parks went smoke-free in 2009, and Alpharetta approved an ordinance in March banning tobacco use at its six city parks and along more than six miles of greenway trails.

“It is our hope that the Board of Commissioners passes this amendment so that this summer, the millions of residents and visitors who enjoy DeKalb’s parks, mountains, bike trails and nature preserves will be able to breathe cleaner air and sit in parks not littered with old cigarette butts,” said Arlene Parker Goldson, acting chair of the DeKalb County Board of Health.

For more information about the Clean Indoor Air Ordinance smoke-free environment efforts, please contact Nykia Greene-Young at (404) 294-3844 or visit www.dekalbhealth.net/ocdp.