

Story originally printed in the La Crosse Tribune or online at [www.lacrossetribune.com](http://www.lacrossetribune.com)

**Published - Monday, January 05, 2009**

## Time for a smoking ban

By AREA HEALTH INITIATIVE MEMBERS | La Crosse

On behalf of all Wisconsin residents we, the undersigned members of La Crosse Area Health Initiative, are requesting that our legislators act quickly to join Wisconsin with the 24 states of the United States that have passed comprehensive smokefree workplace policies.

We believe that everyone deserves to be protected from secondhand smoke, whether they work in an office, as a waitress, bartender, teach school, work as a bank teller, police officer or health care worker.

Smoking is the No. 1 preventable cause of death. Whether you smoke or are exposed to secondhand smoke, there is no safe level of smoke. Even those who smoke would prefer to not be exposed to other peoples' smoke.

Studies conducted following the implementation of smoke-free air policies have shown dramatic reductions in heart attack rates.

These reductions range from 8 percent in New York, 17 percent in Scotland, 27 percent in Pueblo, Colo., and 40 percent in Helena, Mont. These declines translate into reductions in health care expenses, less loss of work time and fewer lives lost. The lives saved could be those of your loved ones, employees, customers and co-workers.

The time is now to adopt smokefree workplace policies to cover all worksites, to level the playing field for all businesses and to protect everyone from exposure to secondhand smoke.

Polls show nearly 80 percent of Wisconsinites want this action. We challenge others to step up and voice your support for smokefree worksites in Wisconsin.

*This letter was signed by Lisa Sauer, La Crosse; Ben Crenshaw, Bangor; Paula Silha, Coon Valley; Nancy Stevenson, La Crosse; Roger Kwong, La Crosse; Doris Doherty, Onalaska; Doug Mormann, La Crosse;*

*Todd Mahr, Onalaska; Lacie Ketelhut, Onalaska; Bill Jones, Onalaska.*

All stories copyright 2000 - 2006 La Crosse Tribune and other attributed sources.