

ADVOCACY ALERT



Sue Rau, Health and Wellness Chair

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Prohibit Smoking on all Playgrounds

Bill S.684b/A.7469b is being considered by the New York State Assembly and Senate. It would prohibit smoking on playgrounds as well as within fifty feet of playgrounds. **This is an important bill to support.**

Tobacco smoke contains over one hundred recognized toxic chemicals, air pollutants or known carcinogens, including benzene, arsenic, cadmium and benzo-a-pyrene. **The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.**

A growing body of research (including results published in the *Journal of the Air and Waste Management Association*, May 2007) shows that air pollution from outdoor tobacco smoke can be quite high, approaching that measured indoors when people smoke. While exposure is variable and affected by distance, wind and atmospheric conditions, persons near an outdoor smoker can be subjected to particulate levels tens of times more concentrated than background air pollution.

Children exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to suffer from colds, ear infections, bronchitis and pneumonia. SHS is especially dangerous to children and adults with asthma. Children who see adults smoking in a family-friendly place like a playground may think smoking is socially acceptable and may emulate the behavior.

This bill would **ban smoking at playgrounds operated by public, private and parochial schools, day care centers, youth centers, or any municipality or state agency, that are used or intended for use by six or more children.** Playgrounds associated with one, two or three-family residential properties are exempted.

Prohibiting smoking in playgrounds will make a positive contribution to the health of children by reducing their exposure to toxic tobacco smoke and at the same time providing them a positive model for smoke free living.

Thank you to the American Cancer Society for information in this alert.