

American Lung Association: Applauds Oneida Nation, Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohican Indians for going tobacco* free, protecting health of workers

Posted on Tuesday, Jun 2, 2020

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Brookfield (June 2, 2020) - "We applaud the decision of the Oneida nation and Stockbridge-Munsee Band of the Mohican Indians for adopting a smokefree workplace policy as they re-open casinos after COVID-19 forced businesses to shut their doors. This policy will protect the health of workers and customers from dangerous secondhand smoke and e-cigarette emissions, and we call for the permanent adoption of this policy.

"Over a decade ago, the U.S. Surgeon General found that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke and that eliminating smoking in indoor spaces is the only way to fully protect people from exposure.

"Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot eliminate this exposure. In addition, the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, an expert organization that sets standards on ventilation in buildings, has had a standard in place on exposure to secondhand smoke for a number of years. One of the main conclusions of this standard is that the only way to completely eliminate the health risks from secondhand tobacco smoke in indoor environments is to prohibit smoking activity.

“Secondhand smoke causes lung cancer and heart disease and worsens existing health conditions including asthma and COPD. Everyone deserves the chance to lead a healthy life, and that means having a safe work environment, free from the health harms associated with secondhand smoke.

“Wisconsin’s smoke free air law, now in effect for 10 years, protects 5.8 million residents from the dangers of involuntary exposure to secondhand smoke. As sovereign nations, tribes have jurisdiction over their tribal lands.

“Ho-Chunk gaming in Madison was the first tribally-owned casino go smokefree, establishing its policy five years ago.

“The American Lung Association will continue to advocate for strong smokefree laws and policies. We strongly urge other casinos in Wisconsin to follow the lead of these tribes.”

*Tobacco in this document refers specifically to the use of manufactured, commercial tobacco products and not to the sacred, medicinal and traditional use of tobacco by American Indians and other groups.