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### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: The Science of Secondhand Smoke**

According to research promoted by the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), the impact of eliminating secondhand smoke in public places has varied effect. Secondhand smoke exposure is an issue of concern since there is a higher likelihood of exposure for children, youth, young adults, racial/ethnic minorities, tenants in multi-unit housing, blue collar workers, and employees in the hospitality industry (bars, restaurants, casinos, etc.)

Since the 1970s, the nonsmokers' rights movement has made significant progress toward expanding clean indoor air protections for everyone, and today 62.7% of the U.S. population is protected from secondhand smoke exposure by local or statewide smokefree laws. Currently, 1,208 municipalities and 28 states, along with the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have laws in effect that require all non-hospitality workplaces, restaurants, and bars to be 100% smokefree. After states and/or municipalities go smokefree in indoor workplaces, many adopt other public health laws and policies, such as addressing e-cigarettes and marijuana use indoors, smokefree multi-unit housing, smoke and tobacco-free college campuses, Tobacco 21, sales of flavored tobacco products, and pharmacies. Casinos are workplaces too: 21 states, along with Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, have laws in effect that require all state-regulated gambling to be 100% smokefree.

However, despite the tremendous progress the U.S. has made in eliminating secondhand smoke in workplaces and public places, this progress has not had the same impact in all places. Much progress remains to be achieved in protecting everyone's right to breathe smokefree air in the workplace and in the home.

Researchers maintain any level of secondhand smoke is harmful. Even brief periods or low levels of secondhand smoke exposure still result in significant health risks, including immediate impact to the cardiovascular system. The science is clear that ventilations systems, smoking rooms, and smoking sections do not address the health hazards of secondhand smoke. The only known way to reduce the risks associated with secondhand smoke is with a 100% smokefree environment.

The world of commercial tobacco has transformed over the years as the tobacco industry constantly develops new ways to hook new users to their dangerous, deadly products and find loopholes in current laws. Two examples of this are electronic cigarettes and cigar lounges which pose threats to those who enjoy smokefree air.

Electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes, are part of a category of products called Electronic Smoking Devices (ESDs), which are designed to mimic combustible tobacco cigarettes and, in most cases,

contain varying levels of nicotine. ESDs are relatively new products that require further study. The scientific evidence on the short-term and long-term health effects of the use of ESDs and exposure to ESD secondhand aerosol is growing, and the initial findings indicate there are risks associated with both use and exposure.

Electronic smoking devices (ESDs) do not just emit “harmless water vapor.” Secondhand aerosol (incorrectly called vapor by the industry) from ESDs contains nicotine, ultrafine particles and low levels of toxins that are known to cause cancer.

Across the country, the increasingly well-organized cigar industry has been pushing for cigar bar/lounge exemptions in strong local and state smokefree laws, peeling back lifesaving protections designed to maintain indoor smoking and boost industry profits, all while putting workers at risk. ‘Cigar lounge’ is a misnomer as these venues are typically bars, with only a small percentage of revenue derived from cigar sales.

The industry pushes for low sales thresholds and weak provisions that allow a wide range of bars, nightclubs, and music venues to operate with indoor smoking. The cigar industry strategy is to claim that cigar bars only cater to a select few, but the reality is that they renormalize smoking, have broad marketing, and chip away at smokefree workplace protections. Often these spaces become smoking lounges for other products, including hookah, marijuana, and cigarettes, which expose staff, patrons, and entertainers to secondhand smoke. Additionally, when a ‘cigar lounge’ is in a mixed-use building, secondhand smoke seeps into adjoining offices, housing, and other businesses thereby exposing workers and patrons to the hazardous secondhand cigar smoke. Cigar bar exemptions are also used by the casino industry to create smoking areas on the gaming floor, creating an unnecessary and unjust loophole to smokefree workplace laws.

Thirdhand smoke is another danger associated with commercial tobacco use. Thirdhand smoke refers to the residual contamination from tobacco smoke that lingers in rooms long after smoking stops and remains on our clothes after we leave a smoky place. It may seem merely like an offensive smell, but it is also indicative of the presence of tobacco toxins.

Thirdhand smoke consists of the tobacco residue from cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products that is left behind after smoking and builds up on surfaces and furnishings. Tobacco smoke is composed of numerous types of gases and particulate matter, including carcinogens and heavy metals, like arsenic, lead, and cyanide. Sticky, highly toxic particulates, like nicotine, can cling to walls and ceilings. Gases can be absorbed into dust in a room, carpets, draperies, and other fabrics or upholsteries and these toxic brews can then re-emit back into the air and recombine to form harmful compounds that remain at high levels long after smoking has stopped occurring.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention, and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. The Coalition is concerned about nicotine addiction and is employing environmental strategies to educate and update the community regarding the negative consequences in collaboration with Carol Meschkow, Manager- Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island. To learn

more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](http://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or to learn more about electronic products visit the Vaping Facts and Myths Page of SAFE's website to learn more about how vaping nicotine and other combustible products is detrimental to your health [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).