

# California Smoke-Free Workplace Law:

## Compliance and Opinion Survey Results: Los Angeles County, 1998-2001

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### Objectives

- To assess long-term compliance with the California Smoke-Free Workplace Law in Los Angeles County freestanding bars and bar/restaurants.
- To identify reasons for the relatively high noncompliance rates among freestanding bars.

### Background

- Annually, SHS is estimated to kill 65,000 non-smoking Americans: 62,000 from heart disease and 3,000 from lung cancer. SHS is the third leading preventable cause of death.
- Numerous studies have found that bar and restaurant workers have high levels of exposure to SHS in comparison to other occupational categories.

### Design

- Population-based annual site inspection survey of a random sample of Los Angeles County freestanding bars and combination bar/restaurants was conducted from 1998 to 2001.
- Brief opinion survey of freestanding and bar/restaurant owners or staff about the California Smoke-Free Workplace Law from sampled freestanding bars and bar/restaurants in 2001.

### Results (See Figures for compliance results)

- 43% of freestanding bar management/staff favored repealing the California Smoke-Free Workplace Law compared to 17% among bar/restaurants.
- Among freestanding bar management/staff who favored repealing the law, 67% of bar/restaurants staff agreed with the statement that "The law has hurt business," 53% agreed with "Smoking should be the owner's choice, not the government's," 40% agreed with "The law unfairly discriminates against smokers," and 32% agreed with "The law forces me to police my customers."

### Conclusions

- Four years after implementation of the law, compliance is nearly universal in bar/restaurants and there are substantial gains in freestanding bars.
- Opinion survey results suggest that some freestanding bar owners/staff remain opposed to the California Smoke-Free Workplace Law.
- About one-third of freestanding bars were not in compliance with the law. Reinvigorated public education and improved enforcement may be necessary to continue to improve protection of workers and patrons from exposure to secondhand smoke in these establishments.

