



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
Oct. 17, 2011

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Week Three of Indoor Air Quality Month Focuses on the Effects of Secondhand Smoke

BISMARCK, N.D. – Governor Jack Dalrymple has proclaimed October 2011 as *Home Indoor Air Quality Month* to encourage North Dakotans to learn more about indoor air quality issues. Week three of *Indoor Air Quality Month* is Environmental Tobacco Smoke Awareness Week and is a great time to remind families about the negative impact that secondhand smoke can have on their loved one's health, according to Michelle Walker, director of the North Dakota Department of Health's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program.

“Environmental tobacco smoke” is more commonly known as secondhand smoke and it includes the smoke that comes from the burning end of a cigarette or cigar and the smoke exhaled by smokers. It contains more than 4,000 chemicals, many of which can cause cancer.

“A 2006 Surgeon General's report indicated that there is *no* risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke,” said Walker. “Children are especially vulnerable. When kids are in environments where there is secondhand smoke, they are at an increased risk of respiratory diseases, ear infections and severe asthma. When infants are exposed to secondhand smoke, there is an increased possibility that they could die of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).”

Walker offers tips that families can follow to protect their loved ones from secondhand smoke:

- Make sure your home and car are smoke-free.
- Ask people not to smoke around you or your children. This includes grandparents and babysitters.
- Talk to your children about the dangers of tobacco and teach them to stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Avoid exposure to secondhand smoke if you are pregnant.

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“Breathing even a little secondhand smoke can be harmful to your health,” said Walker. “If you smoke, the single most important thing you can do to provide a healthy environment for your loved ones is to get help with quitting. North Dakotans can receive free, confidential help with quitting tobacco through the North Dakota Tobacco Quitline and North Dakota QuitNet.”

Call the North Dakota Tobacco Quitline at 1.800.QUIT.NOW (1.800.784.8669) for telephone-based assistance, or log on to North Dakota QuitNet at www.nd.quitnet.com for online assistance. Both services offer professional cessation counseling and free nicotine patches, gum or lozenges for those who qualify.

For more information about secondhand smoke, contact Michelle Walker, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2367 or 800.280.5512. For more information about *Indoor Air Quality Month*, contact Justin Otto, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.5188.

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