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SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE LEGISLATION FILED TODAY

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- Monumental smoke-free workplace legislation was introduced today in the General Assembly that will effectively eliminate secondhand smoke in all Tennessee work places and thereby improve the health of Tennesseans for generations to come.

Beginning today, a statewide campaign coordinated by the Campaign for a Healthy and Responsible Tennessee (CHART) will focus on securing the passage of the bill this session. The campaign partners include the Tennessee Medical Association, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association, the Tennessee Public Health Association, the AFL-CIO, the Tennessee Restaurant Association, The Urban Child Institute in Memphis, numerous public health and business organizations and thousands of Tennesseans.

Coalition spokespersons, including a leading Tennessee physician and restaurant association officer, are available to you today and can be contacted as directed at the end of this release.

Public support for this issue is clear. According to a poll conducted in October 2006 by the American Cancer Society, more than 73 percent of Tennessee voters indicated they support a smoke-free law that would make all workplaces, including restaurants and bars.

“The filing of this smoke-free workplace legislation is a major turning point in the health of Tennessee,” said Nathan James, CHART board president. “The General Assembly has the opportunity now to make history and approve landmark legislation that will positively impact the health of our children and the future health of every Tennessean.”

“Overwhelming and clear scientific information available to every member of the General Assembly should guide their decisions,” James said. This information includes the following current studies:

- In 2006 the U.S. Surgeon General released “The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke” with compelling information on secondhand smoke. The Surgeon General’s report states that secondhand smoke exposure increases risk of developing heart disease by 25 to 30 percent and lung cancer by 20 to 30 percent. The report also states that nearly half of all nonsmoking Americans are regularly exposed to secondhand smoke.
- *The American Journal of Public Health* has recently published a report from 22 different workplace studies. The evidence concluded that people exposed to smoke at work have a 24 percent higher risk of lung cancer. The article goes on to report that workers with frequent exposure to secondhand smoke have a 50 percent higher risk of lung cancer.

“These reports provide very clear information about the health effects of secondhand smoke that cannot be ignored. Previous generations of elected officials could justly say, ‘We simply didn’t know any better,’ but now the evidence is overwhelming. Every day this is delayed puts Tennesseans at risk,” said Shelby Logsdon, CHART executive director.

Tennessee is following an undeniably healthy and responsible trend among states. To date, 21 states have enacted various smoke-free workplace laws including Florida, Louisiana, Ohio, New York, California, Vermont and Utah among others. Smoke-free workplace bans have been enacted in Washington D.C.; Paris, France; Ireland and Italy.

The Campaign for a Healthy and Responsible Tennessee (CHART) is the statewide coalition working to protect Tennesseans from the dangerous effects of tobacco through public education and grassroots mobilization. Smoke-Free Tennessee is a campaign of the CHART and over 20 partners dedicated to creating smoke-free workplaces for all Tennesseans. Learn more about Smoke-Free Tennessee at www.smokefreetn.org. More information about CHART can be found at www.tnchart.org.

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