

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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South Dakota Goes Smoke Free!

Governor Rounds signs smoke free bill

Pierre, March 19, 2009—Governor Rounds signed the smoke free bill into law today, putting South Dakota on the path to reduced cancer rates, heart attacks and decreased health care costs. The law will go into effect July 1, 2009 and includes all bars, restaurants, video lottery establishments and Deadwood casinos.

“Today is an important day for every South Dakotan,” said Dr. Allen Nord, Chairman of the South Dakota Tobacco Free Kids Network. “Eliminating all workplace smoking will save lives and taxpayers money. Tobacco use and secondhand smoke cost this state more than \$500 million a year in health care and other costs. We thank Governor Rounds and the South Dakota Legislature for doing what’s right to address this serious public health risk in our state.”

“Going smoke free means so much to so many people,” added Nord. “For more than a decade, citizens have pleaded their case to lawmakers, wrote letters to their local papers and gone to Pierre time and again all in hopes of reaching a day like today. And now that it’s here, it’s wonderful.”

“These laws pass because they’re proven and effective. We know they reduce secondhand smoke exposure, heart attacks, cancers and a host of other respiratory illnesses. Exposing workers to secondhand smoke day after day for hours on end is simply unacceptable,” explained Nord. Getting it out of the workplace and eliminating the risk where you can just makes good sense for everyone. We’re glad our lawmakers have taken action.”

South Dakota now joins 24 other states, including Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Montana, which have passed statewide smoke free laws as a matter of public health.

In 2006, the U.S. Surgeon General declared that there is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure and secondhand smoke has been proven to increase a person’s risk for lung cancer, heart disease and a variety of serious respiratory illnesses.

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The South Dakota Tobacco-Free Kids Network is a statewide alliance of 54 health, medical, education, parent, youth, law enforcement and other civic organizations dedicated to advocating for laws, policies and funding of effective programs that will result in significant reductions in tobacco use and addiction, especially among children and other high risk groups.