

Maricopa County Policy Assessment: Smoke-Free Parks

Executive Summary

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Overview

The state of Arizona has been active in tobacco-control efforts for over two decades. In 2006, the Smoke-Free Arizona Act (A.R.S. §36-601.01) outlawed smoking within most enclosed public spaces and places of employment primarily to reduce the exposure of individuals to harmful secondhand smoke. The state-wide act “...does not prevent a political subdivision from adopting local ordinances that are more restrictive than the act”, meaning, the act does not preempt local smoke-free laws.

More than 900 local jurisdictions nationwide, including Mesa and Goodyear, Arizona, as well as a few states, have begun to implement policies to make their public outdoor parks and recreation areas smoke-free. With research indicating the health risks of secondhand smoke to adults and children, especially those with asthma or other lung conditions, and the additional burden of the littering of cigarette butts on our environment, the Maricopa County Department of Public Health commissioned this study to determine the feasibility of introducing and implementing similar policies throughout Arizona, and within Maricopa County in particular.

Evaluation Objectives

Four specific objectives guided the project:

1. Identify and summarize the health risks associated with secondhand smoke (SHS) in public parks.
2. Determine the environmental and fiscal impact of tobacco-related litter in public parks.
3. Prepare priority policy alternatives and identify key stakeholders, policy champions and policy promotional tools to consider.
4. Assess the level of public support in Arizona for this policy.

Study Methodology

Data were collected through a multi-method approach consisting of archival data, key informant interviews, and a statewide, telephone-based public opinion survey.

Archival Data

Data were collected from the research literature regarding the health risks and societal and fiscal impacts associated with SHS exposure in public parks. Official and proposed policy language, meeting minutes and recordings, and other documentation were collected to assess smoke-free parks policies both locally and nationwide.

Key Informant Interviews

Eleven key informants participated in face-to-face and/or telephone interviews. These informants, listed below, included lobbyists and legislative liaisons representing county and state-level decision makers as well as community stakeholder groups.

Candace Alexander, COPD/Coalition Manager for Northern Arizona and Mary Kurth, Program Director Arizona COPD Coalition

Colby Bower, Legislative Liaison, Arizona Department of Health Services

Kristin Cippola, Legislative Liaison, County Supervisors Association

Leland Fairbanks, President, Arizonans Concerned About Smoking

Barb Fanning, Director of Government Affairs, Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (AzHHA)

Stuart Goodman, Principal, Goodman Schwartz Public Affairs

Bryan Hummel, Arizona Director of Government Relations, American Cancer Society

Rebecca Nevedale, Associate Director, Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AzAAP)

Nicole Olmstead, Government Relations Director, American Heart Association Arizona

Christian Stumfd, Regional Director of Government Relations, American Lung Association

Brianne Westmore, State Director of Program Services, March of Dimes

Telephone Public Poll Surveys

A telephone-based public opinion survey was conducted to assess statewide attitudes, beliefs, and preferences related to a smoke-free parks policy. The survey was designed and conducted in coordination with the Behavior Research Center and included both landline and cellular telephones. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish with 710 adult heads of household throughout Arizona, including 423 Maricopa County residents, using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) techniques. Survey responses are weighted by county, political party, and age in order to be more representative of all Arizonans.

Policy Alternatives

Assessment of policy alternatives included consideration of the following:

- 1) Policy level (state, county, city)
- 2) Policy type, coverage and venues included
- 3) Enforcement standards and mechanisms
- 4) Designated smoking areas

Key Findings

- Secondhand smoke concentrations in outdoor areas can reach similar levels as those found indoors.
- Tobacco litter makes up more than one-third of all visible litter and 25-50% of all litter collected from streets and roadways, and can cost cities between \$0.5 million and \$6.5 million dollars.
- More than 9 in 10 Arizonans agree that secondhand smoke is harmful.
- More than 8 in 10 Arizonans feel that smoking should be restricted in public parks, but only 18 percent feel that it should be banned completely.
- Successfully passing a smoke-free parks policy through the Arizona legislature would be exceedingly difficult.
- Support for smoke-free parks policies might increase if e-cigarettes were included in the ban.
- There is broad stakeholder support for smoke-free parks policies.

Policy Recommendations

1. Put together a coalition of stakeholders to further discuss the issue.
2. Implement policies at the local level.
3. Consider taking a stepwise approach rather than banning smoking in parks completely.
4. Conduct an educational campaign.
5. Consider putting revenues from policy violations toward signage and park enhancements.