



Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems

MICAP / RECAP

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AADIF / MICAP

P.O. Box 10212
Lansing, MI 48901
(517) 999-0013
info@micap.org

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A Hole in our Public Tobacco Policy: Multi-Unit Housing and Second- and Third-hand Smoking

from the Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education (JADE), Vol. 65, No. 2

by C. Dunlap, S. Maness, D. Larson and M. Cheney

Condensed by Rev. W. J. Amundsen, MICAP Board Member

The researchers/authors remind us that while tobacco is restricted in many public spaces, Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) can happen in Multi-Unit Housing (MUH) where no current laws prohibit use. Controlled studies have shown that Third-Hand Smoke (THS), a toxic form of ETS, can exist in multi-unit housing for months, even after cleaning.

THE PROBLEM:

While most persons are aware of and at least slightly conversant about Second-Hand Smoke, Third-Hand dust and residue can easily be inhaled or absorbed through a person's skin when touching contaminated surfaces. In addition, smoke can drift from units where occupants smoke into non-smoking units thereby exposing non-smokers to both Second-Hand and Third-Hand Smoke. Also, most smokers in multi-unit housing are aware of the health effects of exposing others to Second-Hand Smoke, but few are aware of the dangers of Third-Hand Smoke and the health impact on others in the same building.

CHOSEN FOR THE STUDY:

In this article, good criteria were established to accept persons for an on-line interview. Those who met the criteria were given a FACT-Sheet on Third-Hand Smoke compiled by Mayo Clinic. The FACT-Sheet was written for a "lay" audience and was easily understood. The information on the FACT-Sheet indicated:

- The difference between Second-Hand and Third-Hand Smoke
- That Third-Hand Smoke is toxic
- That it releases chemicals into the air to be breathed by others
- That it clings to surfaces/fabrics in the home
- That children and adult non-smokers may experience health risks when exposed,
- How to remove it from contaminated surfaces.

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Public Tobacco Policy

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PARTICIPANT TRAITS:

After the handing out of the FACT-Sheet from Mayo Clinic and the reading/study of it by the participants, the writers of the study interviewed each participant and noted and collated the following:

- Over 50% of the participants were female, white, and had less than a college degree.
- The average age was 38.3 years
- 50% identified themselves as single or never married
- 66% had no children at home now.
- All lived in multi-unit housing at the time of the study
- Over half smoked one-half pack or more per day
- Half smoked less than a half-pack per day
- Smokers viewed smoke as an annoyance to non-smokers rather than a health risk
- Only a few thought that the “old smoke aroma” came from smoke clinging to clothes or attached to surrounding surfaces.

PARTICIPANTS RESPONSE TO THE INFORMATION SHEET:

About half of the respondents stated that they had no intention to stop smoking. Seven of the participants said they'd still smoke indoors but would clean more. About half suggested that they'd take their smoking outdoors. In the give and take of the interview, most thought of Third-Hand Smoke as a “grime” rather than a hazardous material (toxic substance).

Some of the participants noted that non-smokers entering that kind of environment should accept the associated risks. There was also a sense that they could do as they pleased within their unit because they were paying for it.

CONCLUSIONS:

The authors of the study extrapolated from the interviews that any effort to move persons toward making improvements on Third-Hand Smoke in

multi-unit housing could best be done with posters and information sheets suggesting monetary loss through smoke-related fines, deposit deductions, or cleaning fees rather than appealing to “good-will” gestures for neighbors.

The article raises new awareness of Third-Hand Smoke and the need for a public policy to focus on it. At the very least, encourage land-lords to maintain signage which would alert all tenants to the dangers for non-smoking occupants and fees for smoke damage. At best, the community should be mobilized to encourage the State Legislature to mandate outside smoking in multi-unit housing.

MICAP hopes that by sharing this information, our readers will alert their relatives, friends, acquaintances and landlords to the dangers of Third-Hand smoke. We, at MICAP, also hope that our readers will alert Michigan Senators or Representatives so that bills can be written which would ultimately become laws to help protect the vulnerable.

Note: Part of MICAP's Mission Statement reads: “The Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems (MICAP) works to educate Michigan citizens about the consequences of the use and abuse of beverage alcohol and other impairing drugs and to promote public policies that eliminate or mitigate those consequences.” Nicotine and other drugs in tobacco smoke fall under those “other impairing drugs” category.

Supporting MICAP in Retirement

Eileen R. Ellis, MICAP Secretary

If you are over age 70 and have an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), you can support MICAP (and other non-profit charitable organizations) and reduce your taxes by making your donation directly from your IRA. It is almost always better than an itemized deduction, since your gift is not counted as taxable income. As a result, your taxable income is less, and you pay less in federal, state and local income taxes.

In the tax code, it is called a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). The only catch: You have to be 70 years of age and the gift must be made directly

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Supporting MICAP in Retirement

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from your IRA. Your gift can be all or part of your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD.)

When you itemize charitable donations, the full value of your donations is not offset against federal income taxes, and you get no credit at all on Michigan state or city income taxes. The QCD strategy reduces taxable income by the full value of the gift for city, state and federal purposes.

With recent changes to federal income tax policy, many more of us are using the standard deduction and not itemizing our charitable donations. Even if you take the standard deduction, you can do a QCD and reduce your taxable income.

For more information about how a QCD can benefit you, please check with your IRA administrator, your tax advisor, or email MICAP at info@micap.org.

Spotlight on Prevention Works and the Community Alliance

MICAP board president, Mike Tobias, had a few minutes to talk with Ashley Bergeon who works for Prevention Works in Kalamazoo. Prevention Works was founded around 1995 and Ashley is the Manager for the community coalition that serves Kalamazoo county. The mission of Prevention Works is “Transforming our community by improving the quality of life for all.”

MT: Tell us about yourself.

AB: I've worked in the prevention field for almost a decade. I began working at Prevention Works in 2015. At Prevention Works, I coordinate the community coalition, managed the Drug Free Communities and Stop Underage Drinking grants, lead the youth coalition, and piloted the policy and advocacy work at Prevention Works. I've also partnered with the Michigan Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking (MCRUD) for most of my prevention career, including serving as the former chair. I graduated from The Ohio State University.

MT: Please tell us a few of the things that your organization has done to reduce substance use disorders in your community.

AB: Prevention Works is a prevention-based organization that includes almost a dozen full-time staff and 30 part-time staff. The Programming Department of Prevention Works implements programs for youth and families in schools, out of school, and the community. Annually, Prevention Works serves approximately 3,500 people through programs.

Prevention Works also houses the community-based coalition, which represents almost 200 community partners. This coalition (formerly known as the Kalamazoo County Substance Abuse Task Force, currently in the process of being renamed), formed in the early 2000s and was a DFC-funded coalition for 10 years, and is in the second four year cycle of Stop Act Grant funding. The coalition promotes four prevention awareness campaigns each year (cannabis, underage drinking, prescription medication misuse, and tobacco/vaping), which are designed by the youth team of the coalition. Currently there are 13 youth, ages 14-18 that sit on the youth coalition and come from the two largest school districts in Kalamazoo. They help in creating our radio public service announcements and billboards, and to present information to the community.

In 2019, we partnered with MCRUD to conduct an alcohol outlet density study in the city of Kalamazoo, looking at the number of alcohol retailers in neighborhoods throughout the city, and the correlation between the alcohol outlet density and other indicators such as crime and poverty. We found that off premise retailers cluster in Kalamazoo's poorest neighborhoods. The coalition will be conducting focus groups with the community to get their input on what the coalition's next steps should be.

MT: How can our readers get more information about your organization?

AB: Some of the easiest ways to get more information would be to visit our website at www.prevention-works.org or like and follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/pwkzoo and Instagram@preventionworks.



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American Alcohol and Drug Information Foundation
Mailing address: P.O. Box 10212, Lansing, MI 48901

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Sobering Facts: Why Better Alcohol Policy Matters

- Michigan is the 10th Drunkest State according to a recent study by 24/7 Wall St.
- Michigan's beer tax has been frozen for 60 years at 1.9 cents per bottle. Despite the inflation index over time, policy holders have failed to act.
- Legislation to extend alcohol sales from 2:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. passed the House by a 7 vote margin in 2021 but remains stalled in the Senate.
- The House has passed HB4232, which will allow 17 year olds to sell liquor if the bill is passed in the Senate.

MICAP works to promote public policies that mitigate the negative consequences of alcohol use and misuse. You can learn more about our accomplishments and current legislative priorities at micap.org.