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**RESPIRATORY  
HEALTH  
ASSOCIATION<sup>SM</sup>**  
*of Metropolitan Chicago*

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Contact: Kevin Tynan  
(312)-628-0225  
Cellular: (312)-659-6884  
Meghan Mahan  
(312) 628-0250

STATEMENT OF JOEL J. AFRICK PRESIDENT & CEO  
RESPIRATORY HEALTH ASSOCIATION  
OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO  
IN RESPONSE TO GOV. BLAGOJEVICH SIGNING SMOKE-FREE ILLINOIS  
LEGISLATION

Monday, July 23, 2007

We're delighted that on January 1, 2008, Illinois will become the 22<sup>nd</sup> smoke-free state in the country.

A smoke-free Illinois will bring many health benefits. Based on experience in other states that have gone smoke-free, we can expect lung cancer rates and heart attack rates in Illinois to drop by 20%. That is good news for bar and hospitality workers, seniors and people with respiratory illnesses who now will be protected from secondhand smoke. Beginning January 1, parents can take children to restaurants without fears of triggering an asthma emergency. This is a great victory for public health.

We need to remember the many volunteers, health and community organizations, churches and legislators who made this day possible. We take pride in the pivotal role the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago played in its passage. Many of our volunteers have been working for this legislation for more than twenty years.

We also are grateful to the courageous restaurateurs who were among the first to go smoke-free. Their message was clear: the health of workers and guests must come first.

Chicago's Lung Health  
Leader Since 1906

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1440 W. Washington Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60607-1878  
Phone: (312) 243-2000  
Fax: (312) 243-3954  
[www.lungchicago.org](http://www.lungchicago.org)