



## Media Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 24, 2011

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### **Proposed ordinance would allow smoking rooms in city's nursing homes** **\*\* Interview Opportunity \*\***

**WHAT:** The Chicago City Council Health Committee will hear testimony this morning on a proposed ordinance that would allow unsupervised smoking rooms in the city's nursing homes. The ordinance, proposed by Alderman Capplemann (46<sup>th</sup> Ward) would create an exemption to the smoke-free regulations established in 2007 that prohibit smoking in workplaces, including nursing homes.

Currently, Illinois state law permits smoking rooms in long-term care facilities for residents who have written permission to smoke. Although separate ventilation systems are required in smoking rooms, secondhand smoke still seeps to other areas and exposes residents and staff to toxins, and there is no air ventilation system that removes all of these toxins.

**WHEN:** Monday, October 24, 2011

**WHO:** **Joel Africk – President and Chief Executive Officer**  
Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago  
***Available on site or by phone***

**STATEMENT:** This legislation would be a setback for Chicago's public health. Allowing smoking in any one room will expose every person in a nursing home to the thousands of toxins in secondhand smoke. For the past five years, nursing homes in Chicago, like all other indoor facilities, have been smoke-free, and this legislation would reverse that. It would also significantly increase the risk of fires, as nursing homes are notorious sites of fires due to flammable substances such as oxygen tanks. Finally, this legislation does not make sense economically. The cost of establishing, testing and certifying smoking rooms is more than the city's finances can – and indeed should – handle. Nursing homes should be kept smoke-free in order to protect the health of our most vulnerable populations.

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**Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago** has been a local public health leader since 1906. Today, the association addresses asthma, COPD, lung cancer, tobacco control and air quality with a comprehensive approach involving research, education and advocacy activities. For more information, visit [www.lungchicago.org](http://www.lungchicago.org).