



# It's time for all LA to *breathe easy*

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**EMBARGOED UNTIL APRIL 6, 2016 AT 12PM**

### **UCLA study shows majority of Angelenos support smoke-free apartment policies, yet 4 out of 5 apartments still not protected** *UCLA-led coalition launches citywide effort to promote smoke-free apartments*

**LOS ANGELES, APRIL 6, 2016 ...** More than 80 percent of Los Angeles apartment dwellers are not protected from secondhand smoke and would support smoke-free policies in their buildings, according to a pair of [UCLA studies](#) released today at the kickoff of a new citywide campaign to reduce secondhand smoke in multi-unit apartment buildings.

The two studies, conducted by the [UCLA Center for Health Policy Research](#), outline findings from nearly 1,000 door-to-door tenant interviews held in some of the most densely populated areas of the city of Los Angeles, as well as reports submitted to UCLA by 93 apartment owners representing over 5,400 units in the city.

#### **Significant support for smoke-free policies**

While the number of apartments covered by a smoke-free policy is low (20 percent), the two studies indicate that support is high among both tenants and landlords. Eighty-two percent of tenants said they would prefer to live in a smoke-free apartment. Ironically, those who smoke were even more likely to support a smoke-free policy, with eighty-five percent preferring to live in a smoke-free apartment.

The majority of landlords (55 percent) also expressed support for these policies, noting the value of creating a healthy environment, lowering maintenance costs and increasing marketability of the property. In addition, landlords with smoke-free policies already in place unanimously reported that these policies had no negative effect on vacancy rates, according to the study.

"Our findings send a strong message to property owners that renters want healthy smoke-free homes," said Ying-Ying Meng, the lead author of both studies and co-director of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research's Chronic Disease Program. "Tenants want clean air in their homes and common areas. Landlords recognize that it pays to be smoke free due to the extra expense and liability of permitting smoking."

Secondhand smoke is dangerous at any level and can lead to many avoidable health conditions, including heart disease, lung cancer, stroke and asthma. Children and the chronically ill are particularly vulnerable. According to the study, 37 percent of residents report smoke drifting into their home from another apartment or a common area. Households with a child, chronically ill resident or person of color were even more likely to be exposed. Yet currently there is no ordinance in the city of Los Angeles that prohibits indoor smoking in apartments and condominiums, even in common areas where children frequently play.

**MAKE IT HAPPEN!**  
[www.SmokeFreeAptsLA.org](http://www.SmokeFreeAptsLA.org)

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## Confusion about implementation

So if there is such high support for smoke-free policies, why aren't more tenants covered? According to the study, a majority of landlords report either never having thought about the issue or not being aware that they could implement a smoking policy. Many landlords also assume that the city is responsible for the issue, yet in fact property owners have the right to make decisions themselves regarding smoking on their properties.

"Landlords understand how expensive it can be to have someone smoke in one of their units," said Joe Patel, president of the Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles (AAGLA), the city's largest organization representing owners and managers. "It can cost up to \$15,000 to renovate a smoker's unit, not including the immense health costs of secondhand smoke and the potential for liability if a neighbor gets sick. Unfortunately, this reality has yet to translate into smoke-free policies due to a lack of awareness. Our new campaign is going to change that."

## Smokefree Apartments Los Angeles to launch citywide campaign

To help tenants breathe easier, the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has partnered with AAGLA, CDTech, FAME Corporations and a coalition of partners, including the American Lung Association, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and others, to launch a major community outreach campaign.

The campaign, Smokefree Apartments Los Angeles, introduced today, informs tenants about the risks of secondhand smoke and provides them with the tools they need to communicate with their landlords about voluntary smoke-free policies. The campaign will also reach out directly to property owners and managers across the city to provide assistance in implementing voluntary smoke-free policies.

The advertising campaign will consist of billboards, bus shelters, print placements, social media ads and direct mail pieces, all of which will show the following message encouraging the public to take action on voluntary smoke-free policies.



"We have an incredible opportunity to spark long overdue changes that will protect renters' health and landlords' bottom lines," said Marlene Gomez, the campaign's manager. "Together we're going to ensure that all of LA can breathe easy in their own home."

For more information on the campaign or to take action, visit [www.smokefreeaptsla.org](http://www.smokefreeaptsla.org).

###

[Smokefree Apartments Los Angeles](http://SmokefreeApartmentsLosAngeles.org) is a community outreach program of the [UCLA Center for Health Policy Research](http://UCLA Center for Health Policy Research) that aims to increase access to smoke-free apartments in low-income neighborhoods within the city of Los Angeles. The program is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and executed in partnership with the Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles, CDTech, FAME and a coalition of public health partners, including ChangeLab Solutions, the American Lung Association, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Los Angeles Unified School District Student Health and Human Services, USC Tobacco Center for Regulatory Sciences in Vulnerable Populations and the UCLA School of Medicine.

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Project Overview

## THE PROBLEM

Secondhand smoke can drift through walls, ventilation systems and windows - even when they are closed - harming everyone in an apartment building.

According to a new UCLA study, 80 percent of Los Angeles apartment residents live in buildings that allow smoking, and nearly half of them report breathing in their neighbor's smoke. A majority of landlords are ready to change this yet haven't acted because they don't know what to do next.

## THE PROJECT

Smokefree Apartments Los Angeles (SALA) is a three-year campaign that aims to reduce Angelenos' exposure to secondhand smoke and prevent avoidable health problems, like lung cancer, heart disease and chronic asthma, by helping landlords and renters work together to implement voluntary smoke-free apartment policies.

### **This will be accomplished by:**

- Educating **renters** in low-income communities about the risks of secondhand smoke and proven strategies for engaging their neighbors and landlords.
- Informing **property owners and managers** of the economic benefits of smoke-free policies and providing them with the steps they can take to implement voluntary policies in their properties.
- Inspiring **health advocates and community groups** to spread the word on smoke-free housing.
- Partnering with the **city of Los Angeles Housing Department** to draft guidelines that clarify the process for implementing smoke-free policies in rent-controlled properties.

## THE PARTNERS

Smokefree Apartments Los Angeles is led by the **UCLA Center for Health Policy Research's** Smokefree Air for Everyone (S.A.F.E.) program and funded by the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**. It is a partnership of the Center and the following organizations:

- Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles
- CDTEch
- FAME Corporations
- Smokefree Air For Everyone (S.A.F.E.)
- American Lung Association
- California Smoker's Helpline (1-800-NO BUTTS)
- ChangeLab Solutions
- Los Angeles County Dept. of Public Health-TCPP
- Los Angeles Unified School District Student Health and Human Services
- USC TCORS, Keck School of Medicine of the University of Southern California
- UCLA School of Medicine

The project has additional support from the following groups:

- American Cancer Society
- American Heart Association
- California Department of Public Health
- Office of Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer
- The California Endowment
- UCLA Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Equity
- UCLA Cancer Prevention and Control.

## THE CAMPAIGN

SALA will feature a major public outreach campaign composed of billboards, bus shelters, print placements, social media ads and direct mail pieces that will inform key audiences.

The advertisements, which feature a provoking image of a young girl with breathing problems, will urge tenants and landlords to help "make it happen" by visiting [www.smokefreeaptsla.org](http://www.smokefreeaptsla.org) to take action in their building.

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*Study Findings*

## WHAT

According to a pair of studies released on April 6, 2016, 80 percent of Los Angeles apartment residents live in buildings that allow smoking indoors, and nearly half of them report breathing in their neighbor's smoke. Eighty-two percent of tenants said they would prefer to live in a smoke-free apartment, and residents who smoke were even more likely to support a smoke-free policy.

The majority of landlords also expressed support for these policies, noting the value of tenant health, lower maintenance costs and increased marketability. Yet most haven't acted because they don't know what they can do next. Additionally, landlords with smoke-free policies already in place unanimously reported that these policies had no negative effect on vacancy rates.

## WHY

Secondhand smoke can drift through walls, ventilation systems and windows - even when they are closed - harming everyone in an apartment building. It can be responsible for major health problems, including lung cancer, heart disease and chronic asthma.

## HOW

Researchers held nearly 1,000 door-to-door tenant interviews conducted in some of the most densely populated areas of the city of Los Angeles and then analyzed reports submitted to UCLA by 93 apartment owners representing over 5,400 units in the city.

## WHO

The study was conducted by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research in partnership with FAME Corporations, CDTech and Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles (AAGLA). It was funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## KEY FINDINGS



**80 PERCENT**  
OF APARTMENTS  
DON'T HAVE A  
SMOKE-FREE POLICY



**1 OUT OF 3**  
RENTERS  
REPORT SECONDHAND  
SMOKE DRIFTING  
INTO THEIR HOMES

**82 PERCENT**  
OF APARTMENT RESIDENTS  
SUPPORT SMOKE-FREE  
APARTMENT POLICIES



**55 PERCENT**  
OF LANDLORDS  
SUPPORT SMOKE-FREE  
POLICIES IN APARTMENTS  
& COMMON AREAS

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# It's time for all LA to breathe easy

*Campaign Materials*

## Billboards:



## Bus Shelters:



## Newspapers & Magazines:

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**GOOD FOR BUSINESS. GOOD FOR HEALTH.**

UCLA's Smokefree Apartments Los Angeles is launching a campaign to inform and educate landlords and tenants about the dangers of secondhand smoke and the benefits of adopting voluntary no-smoking policies in apartments.

**Why smoke-free policies?**

- Save on average \$5,000 per smoked-in unit in maintenance and turnover costs
- Four out of five tenants in LA support smoke-free policies
- Six out of 10 apartment owners believe tobacco smoke is a liability

Learn how you can adopt a smoke-free policy at [www.SmokeFreeAptsLA.org](http://www.SmokeFreeAptsLA.org).

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MADE POSSIBLE BY THE FUNDING FROM THE CIGARETTE PRODUCE AND PROMOTION TAX

## Mailers:

**SMOKE FREE APARTMENTS LA** **AAGLA** APARTMENT ASSOCIATION OF GREATER LOS ANGELES

**GOOD FOR BUSINESS. GOOD FOR HEALTH.**

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## Digital Media:



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## Health Implications of Secondhand Smoke

Secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard, causing more than 41,000 deaths per year. It can cause or make worse a wide range of damaging health effects in children and adults. It can drift through air vents, windows and doors, affecting everyone within an apartment building.

There is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke contains hundreds of chemicals known to be toxic or carcinogenic, including formaldehyde, benzene, vinyl chloride, arsenic, ammonia and cyanide.

### Cardiovascular Diseases:

- Heart Attack
- Coronary Heart Disease
- Leukemia
- Stroke

### Reproductive Problems:

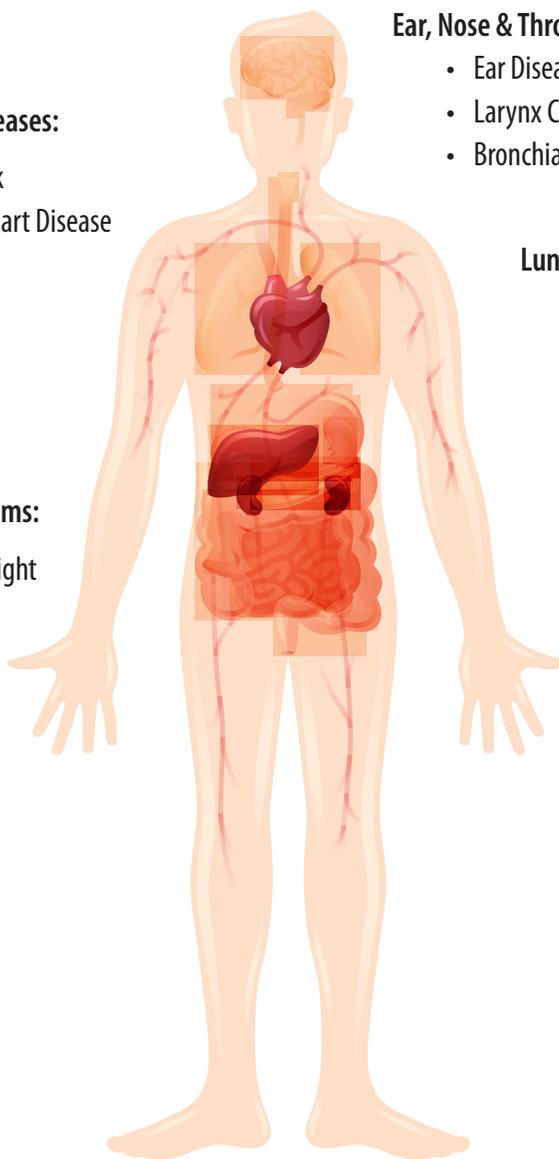
- Low Birth Weight
- SIDS

### Ear, Nose & Throat Diseases

- Ear Disease
- Larynx Cancer
- Bronchial Cancer

### Lung & Respiratory Diseases:

- Asthma
- Bronchitis
- Impaired Breathing
- Lung Cancer
- Lung Disease
- Pneumonia



Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Lung Association and American Cancer Society

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## Steps to a Smoke-free Policy

### WHY ADOPT A SMOKE-FREE POLICY?

- Exposure to tobacco smoke can cause serious health problems for tenants, including lung cancer, heart disease and stroke.
- The average cost of turning over a smoking unit is \$5,000 more than turning over a non-smoking unit. In addition, work related to smoking in a unit can include painting, repairing walls, replacing ceilings and fixtures, and installing new carpeting costing as much as \$15,000.
- Smoke-free apartments reduce the likelihood of legal claims against landlords from a tenant who develops an illness or suffers harm because of exposure to secondhand or thirdhand smoke.
- A smoke-free policy also helps reduce the risk of fires and may qualify a building for insurance discounts.
- It is completely legal for landlords nationwide to adopt no-smoking policies for their buildings and premises. There is no law against such action.

### STEPS FOR LANDLORDS

**Step 1:** Conduct a survey of your tenant's attitudes on smoke-free apartment policies.

**Step 2:** Notify tenants of your intention to implement a smoke-free policy, detail its provisions and inform them of the policy's benefits.

**Step 3:** Revise leases with proper notice. If units are rent controlled, ask for voluntary compliance or implement policies unit by unit as vacancies appear.

**Step 4:** Educate all tenants about the dangers of secondhand smoke and the benefits of smoke-free policies.

**Step 5:** Talk to those who smoke about their options, the benefits of a smoke-free policy and support them with resources if they want to quit. For more information on how to quit smoking, visit the "Ready to Quit?" section of the Smokefree Apartments Los Angeles website.

**Step 6:** Moving forward, always inform prospective tenants about your property's smoke-free policy and provide a no-smoking lease.

**Step 7:** Celebrate your new smoke-free policy with your tenants and encourage your colleagues to follow your lead.

### STEPS FOR RENTERS

**Step 1:** Check your building's rules on smoking and talk to your neighbor to find a solution.

**Step 2:** If no agreement is reached, report the problem to your landlord.

**Step 3:** For those with allergies or chronic illnesses, request a reasonable accommodation under fair housing laws by providing a doctor's note.

**Step 4:** Document everything. Keep a diary of each smoking incident.

**Step 5:** Review solutions with management. If a smoke-free policy is not yet an option, you may be able to seal cracks, fix windows or install an air purifier to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke..

**Step 6:** Inform your landlord about the economic and health benefits of a smoke-free policy. Convince other residents to ask your landlord to implement a policy.

**Step 7:** If your landlord is unresponsive, ask to be moved to a different unit or to have those who smoke move to a different unit, if one is available.

**Step 8:** Contact the tobacco control program at your local health department or the local American Lung Association to see what else can be done to improve the situation.

Help your neighbors who smoke to quit. Get info at [www.SmokeFreeAptsLA.org](http://www.SmokeFreeAptsLA.org).

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