

Mission Statement

"Building healthier lives, free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke."

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April 6, 2018

Re: Smoke and Vape Free Parks

Position: Support



Dear Councilmembers,

For the record, my name is Ann Nelson. I am the Chair for the Northern Nevada American Heart and Stroke Association Board of Directors. The American Heart and Stroke Association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. We fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide critical tools and information to save and improve lives. I am submitting this letter on behalf of our Board in support of the Smoke and Vape Free Parks agenda item 9.1.

Smokers aren't the only ones affected by tobacco smoke. Secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard for nonsmokers, especially children. Nonsmokers who have high blood pressure or high blood cholesterol have an even greater risk of developing heart diseases when they're exposed to secondhand smoke. Additionally, exposure to e-cigarette liquid and vapor can be harmful. From late 2010 through early 2014, there was an increase in the number of calls to poison control centers due e-cigarette exposure which can include exposure to the nicotine refill liquids.

Secondhand tobacco smoke contributes to about 34,000 premature heart disease deaths and 7,300 lung cancer deaths yearly across our nation. Studies show that the risk of developing heart disease is about 25-30 percent higher among people exposed to environmental tobacco smoke at home or work. Secondhand smoke promotes illness, too. Children of smokers have many more respiratory infections than do children of nonsmokers.

The 2006 Surgeon General's Report reveals that secondhand smoke causes disease in children. Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk for acute respiratory infections, ear problems, and more severe asthma. The Report also states that the scientific evidence about the dangers of secondhand smoke is clear: there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Our kids should be able to play at our local parks without being exposed to dangerous second-hand smoke and other dangerous toxins.

We echo the sentiments outlined in the Surgeon General's Report "there is no safe level of exposure" and support this effort to eliminate smoking and vaping at our parks.

Ann Nelson

Chair, Northern Nevada Board of Directors