



April 4, 2018

RE: Smoke-Free Parks in Sparks

Dear Sparks City Council,

As the voice of public health in Nevada, the Nevada Public Health Association (NPHA) would like to express our support of agenda item 9.1 regarding smoke-free and vape-free parks. Tobacco use and exposure is the leading cause of death in our country and the more places we can designate in our community as smoke free, the more we can protect non-smokers from exposure to secondhand smoke and encourage quitting among those that smoke.

The Surgeon General released a report in 2006 that concluded "There is no safe amount of secondhand (tobacco) smoke. Breathing even a little secondhand smoke can be dangerous". Secondhand smoke exposure in outdoor spaces may be at lower levels than indoors, but the chemicals in the smoke whether indoors or outdoors are the same. These chemicals are dangerous, particularly for children and adults with heart and lung disease. Exposure to secondhand smoke can trigger breathing problems like asthma, aggravate allergies, and cause irritation of skin, eyes, nose and throat. The science on the health risks of second hand vapor from electronic cigarettes is not as substantiated as second hand tobacco smoke, but public health experts agree that the best thing for people to put in their lungs is clean air.

In Nevada, the most recent data shows that 16.5% of adult residents are current smokers, and the prevalence of smoking in Washoe County is even lower at 15.3% (BRFSS, 2016). Smoke free parks in the Truckee Meadows region will protect children as well as the 85% of non-smoking adults from exposure to secondhand smoke and vapor. Removing smoking from parks will also help create a culture of health in our region where we strengthen the non-smoking social norm for our children.

Expanding smoke free locations throughout Nevada is a high priority for NPHA, its members and communities. If there is any assistance that NPHA can offer related to smoke free efforts, please let us know by contacting myself, or the lead of our Advocacy and Policy Committee John Packham at (775) 784-1235 or jpackham@med.unr.edu.

Sincerely,

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President, Nevada Public Health Association
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