



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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State of Tobacco Control Report – Updated Grading Methodology

Report will include tobacco control grades for all 482 incorporated cities and towns in California

Dear Board of Supervisors:

For over a decade the American Lung Association has released a national *State of Tobacco Control (SOTC)* report, with the next one scheduled to be released in January 2015. In conjunction with the national SOTC report, the American Lung Association in California releases a tobacco control report card for all 482 incorporated cities and towns and 58 counties in California entitled, *State of Tobacco Control – California Local Grades Report*. This year, the American Lung Association in California has developed a new grading methodology to use for the annual report to better reflect the strong local policies passing throughout the state.

While we have made enormous progress in the fight against tobacco, it is still the number one cause of preventable death in the United States. Since 1964, we have cut smoking rates by more than half, dramatically reduced exposure to secondhand smoke, reduced rates of lung cancer and other tobacco-related diseases and fundamentally changed public attitudes about tobacco resulting in millions of lives saved. Despite this progress, tobacco remains a dangerous threat, killing almost 34,000 Californians each year, causing illness in even more and costing the state nearly \$22 billion in health care bills and lost productivity. More needs to be done to decrease these numbers and to stop the 20,300 children in California who start smoking each year from picking up this deadly and addictive habit.

Over the past 50 years, we have developed proven strategies that can achieve our public health goals if they are fully and effectively implemented. These strategies are reflected in the grading categories in both the national and local SOTC reports.

Here in California we've used the same methodology for grading the SOTC report for the past six years. This year we will use an updated methodology. In the six years since the original methodology was developed, the bar has been raised by cities and counties across the state passing strong policies. We want our grading methodology to reflect these strong policies that we know will improve the health of California residents.

In the new methodology, grades are assigned for the following policy categories: Smokefree Outdoor Air, Smokefree Housing, and Reducing Sales of Tobacco Products. These three grades, plus an Emerging Issues bonus point section, are then averaged for one Overall Tobacco Control Grade. The updated grading methodology for the *State of Tobacco Control Report – California Local Grades* may result in jurisdictions receiving adjusted grades.

We encourage you to work with us to improve your city's tobacco control grade. Please visit our About Us page at <http://www.lung.org/California> to contact your local American Lung Association in California office for more information on the impact of smoking in your community and what can be done to improve your grade.

We hope you will join us in the fight to breathe easier.

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