

EXHIBIT 13  
DATE 2-16-05  
HB 643

 **DEACONESS BILLINGS CLINIC**

February 15, 2005

Representative Ariene Becker, Chairwoman  
House Health and Human Services Committee  
Montana House of Representatives  
Helena, Montana 59620

Dear Madame Chairwoman and Members of the Committee:

As an organization that is concerned with the health and well being of our citizens, and has participated in the development of the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Plan, we respectfully urge your support of House Bill 643, the Montana Tobacco Free Schools and Smokefree Public Places Law currently in consideration before your committee.

By making public places, particularly our schools, smokefree, we can go a long ways towards helping to prevent kids from starting a lifetime of addiction. It will help adults who want to quit smoking and it will help to protect hospitality workers from deadly second-hand smoke.

Tobacco smoke causes the premature death of up to up to 65,000 Americans (175 Montanans) per year who have never smoked but have been exposed to secondhand tobacco smoke. It is a known carcinogen causing 3,000 lung cancers per year in non-smokers. The most significant impact of secondhand smoke is on the cardiovascular (heart) system. Even in limited exposure (30 minutes) tobacco smoke can harm the cardiovascular system.

A November 2002 statewide poll of 602 registered Montana voters by the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association and the American Lung Association of the Northern Rockies showed Montanans support a prohibit on smoking in most indoor public places including workplaces, public buildings, bars, casinos and restaurants by an overwhelming margin of 66% to 29%.

HB 643 would require that all indoor public places – businesses, restaurants, bars and casinos be free of tobacco smoke to protect public health and the health of the employees.

If passed Montana would join the sixteen other states that already have enacted, or are likely to soon pass, workplace legislation for all workers, including restaurant and bar workers.

The Centers for Disease Control and other reputable sources have concluded that the most effective method for reducing exposure to deadly secondhand smoke is the establishment of smoke free environments.

On behalf of Deaconess Billings Clinic, we thank you for your consideration of our views, and urge your support of House Bill 643, the Montana Tobacco Free Schools and Smokefree Public Places Law.

Sincerely,

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