

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**August 17, 2005**

**Contacts: Bronson Frick, Associate Director**  
**(510) 841-3032**  
**Annie Tegen, Senior Program Manager**  
**(206) 235-3665**  
[www.no-smoke.org](http://www.no-smoke.org)

## **ANNUAL COST OF SECONDHAND SMOKE OVER \$10 BILLION**

**Berkeley, CA** – A new study sponsored by the Committee on Life Insurance Research and conducted by members of the Society of Actuaries and Georgia State University researchers (Behan, Eriksen, & Lin) concluded that **secondhand smoke exposure costs the United States \$10 billion per year**. The costs come in the form of \$5 billion in health care costs and another \$5 billion in indirect costs, including \$4.6 billion in lost wages. The study did not include the costs of secondhand smoke exposure on children.

“We’ve caught the thief red handed,” said Bronson Frick, Associate Director of Americans for Nonsmokers’ Rights. “Secondhand tobacco smoke takes over 50,000 lives from the U.S. each year. Now we know secondhand smoke is making off with our wallets, as well.”

The report states, “Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) has been shown to be associated with increases in rates of cancer, morbid conditions of the respiratory and cardiovascular system and increases in the rates of spontaneous abortion and perinatal mortality. The authors combine exposure data, data on increased morbidity and medical and indirect cost data, all derived from published reports, to estimate the total economic cost of ETS exposure in the United States”

The study estimates that costs associated with secondhand smoke exposure were \$5 billion higher fifteen years ago, before smokefree workplaces and public place laws were so prevalent.

“The good news is that exposure to secondhand smoke has dropped dramatically in the past fifteen years, thanks to thousands of smokefree workplace laws,” said Frick. “As fewer people are exposed to smoke, we see huge drops in medical costs associated with disease and death due to exposure. By passing more smokefree laws, we will not only save lives, but literally *billions* of dollars in the process.”

Over 2,000 municipalities now have laws on the books to protect people from secondhand smoke. At present, 36% of the United States population is protected from secondhand smoke by state or local law.

Americans for Nonsmokers’ Rights is a national, member-based, not-for-profit organization based in Berkeley, CA that is dedicated to helping nonsmokers breathe smokefree air in enclosed public places and workplaces.

A link to the full study is available at the following web address:

<http://www.soa.org/ccm/content/areas-of-practice/life-insurance/research/economic-effects-of-environmental-tobacco-smoke-SOA/?printerFriendly=1>. For questions or comments on the report itself, contact Ronora Stryker, SOA Research Actuary, at [rstryker@soa.org](mailto:rstryker@soa.org).

###