



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
For science. For action. For health.

January 27, 2015

The Honorable LaToya Cantrell
City Hall, Room 2W10
1300 Perdido Street
New Orleans, LA 70112

Dear Councilwoman Cantrell:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, a diverse community of public health professionals who champion the health of all people and communities, I write to thank you for your leadership in protecting the health of all New Orleans residents, workers and visitors by making all workplaces and public places in New Orleans smoke-free. Approving the smoke-free ordinance marks a historic victory for public health and will serve to protect the public from the lasting, and even fatal, impact of exposure to secondhand smoke. This new policy also ensures that APHA and the nearly 13,000 public health professionals who attend our Annual Meeting and Exposition can return to New Orleans in the coming years based on our commitment to hold our meetings in cities that have a comprehensive smoke-free policy.

Since 1964, exposure to secondhand smoke has killed 2.5 million nonsmokers. Additionally, exposure to secondhand smoke has known health effects, including immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system, and coronary heart disease and lung cancer. There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Everyone should have the right to breathe clean, smoke-free air and the evidence is clear that the only way to provide protection from the dangerous chemicals in secondhand smoke is to eliminate smoking indoors. The Council's recent action will prevent exposure, and improve health and quality of life. A smoke-free New Orleans will mean a healthier New Orleans for its residents and visitors.

The city now joins a growing list of cities and states with a comprehensive smoke-free law and contributes to the momentum building across the U.S. to protect the public's right to breathe smoke-free air. We applaud your commitment to this effort to improve the health, and lives, of the New Orleans community and we urge you to oppose any future efforts to weaken this historic public health victory.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD
Executive Director

Cc: New Orleans City Council
The Honorable Mitch Landrieu