

Office of the Vice Mayor

From the desk of Henrietta Davis
Vice Mayor

To: D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk
CC:
From: Henrietta Davis 
Date: 4/2/2003
Re: Health Study on Proposed Smoking Ban

Please place the attached article on the Communications and Reports from Other City Officers for the City Council meeting of April 7, 2003.

Thank you.

**Communications and Reports from
City Officers #1**

A communication was received
from Vice Mayor Henrietta Davis,
regarding a health study on
proposed smoking ban.

In City Council April 7, 2003

PLACED ON FILE. ORDER

The Nation A3
Boston Globe 4/2/03

Smoke ban found to cut heart attacks

By Daniel Q. Haney

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — Heart attacks in Helena, Mont., fell by more than half last summer, after voters passed a broad indoor smoking ban, suggesting that cleaning up the air in bars and restaurants quickly improves health for everyone, a study has found.

Doctors said their study is the first to examine what happens to public health when people stop smoking and breathing secondhand smoke in public places.

The doctors, themselves backers of the ban, acknowledged that such effects need to be demonstrated in a larger locale. Despite the small numbers involved, they said Helena's experience offers a clear hint that the change reduces the risk of heart attacks for smokers and nonsmokers alike from virtually the moment it goes into effect.

People who worry about secondhand smoke often fear lung cancer most, but that disease is typically the result of years of exposure. Smoking is also a powerful trigger of heart attacks, and it increases the risk by raising blood pressure, by increasing the tendency of blood to make clots, and in other ways.

The American Heart Association estimates that 35,000 nonsmokers die each year from the effects of secondhand smoke on the heart. It said the Helena data should encourage more cities to limit smoking.

Helena's smoking ban was adopted by voters in June and lasted for six months, until enforcement was suspended after a legal challenge. It "led to an immediate and dramatic decline in the number of heart attacks we saw," from an average of seven a month to three, said Dr. Richard Sargent.

Heart attacks climbed back to their usual level after smoking returned to bars, restaurants, casinos, bowling alleys, and other public places in December.

Sargent — who with his coauthor, Dr. Robert Shepard, encouraged passage of the ordinance — presented the data yesterday to applause at the annual scientific meeting of the American College of Cardiology, in Chicago.

Dr. Richard Pasternak, director of preventive cardiology at Massachusetts General Hospital, cautioned that because of the small number of heart attacks in Helena, the effect of a smoking ban may be different in a larger population.

Nevertheless, "it's very plausible that you could see this kind of broad effect," Pasternak said. "It just takes one cigarette to make a vulnerable plaque rupture, triggering a heart attack."

The authors of the study kept track of all heart attacks in Helena, population 26,000, and compared that with the previous four years, adjusting the figures for seasonal ups and downs.

They found that the incidence of heart attacks among smokers dropped by three-quarters, compared with two-thirds for former smokers and one-half for nonsmokers.

S-143

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