



Burbank, Calabasas smoke bans praised

Cities ranked on protecting people from secondhand fumes

By Troy Anderson, Staff Writer

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Only three Los Angeles County cities - Burbank, Calabasas and Baldwin Park - received A's in the first American Lung Association report card released Monday ranking efforts by cities to protect residents from secondhand smoke.

Hoping to raise awareness about the dangers of secondhand smoke even in outdoor settings, public health officials and Calabasas and Burbank city officials urged other cities in the county to adopt smoke-free ordinances.

"Protections are still lacking for millions of Los Angeles County and Orange County residents who are susceptible to secondhand smoke, which is a major contributor to lung cancer, asthma, heart attacks and stroke," said Trisha Murakawa, a board member of the American Lung Association of California.

The report card, which follows the passage of a law Jan. 1 making it illegal to smoke inside a car with children, gave mixed grades to the county's 88 cities and to Orange County's 34 cities.

The 10 largest cities in the county, which make up nearly 56 percent of the population, had a higher score than the combined average of the rest of the 78 smaller cities.

Glendale received a B, while Los Angeles, Long Beach and Pasadena got C's, Santa Clarita, Torrance, Palmdale, Lancaster and El Monte checked in with D's and Pomona failed.

The cities were graded based on what local ordinances or policies had been passed in five categories pertaining to smoking at parks, outdoor dining areas, entryways, outdoor service areas and apartment buildings and ordinances aimed at reducing illegal sales of tobacco to minors.

County Department of Public Health Director Dr. Jonathan E. Fielding said the report card demonstrates the opportunities available to take steps to protect residents.

"It's really important to remember that in Los Angeles County, as in California and the rest of the nation, tobacco remains the No. 1 cause of premature death," he said. "One out of three people who smoke die of smoking-related diseases."

Although only 14 percent of county residents smoke, Fielding said cities can pass ordinances similar to the ones in Calabasas, Burbank and Baldwin Park that will expand protections to residents from secondhand smoke.

Calabasas was the first city in the state to pass

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an ordinance that prohibits smoking in all outdoor public areas. Other cities and counties in California have also passed ordinances requiring smokers to stand 20-50 feet from building entrances. Los Angeles, San Fernando and Pasadena have made parks smoke-free.

The California Legislature recently passed a law prohibiting smoking and disposing of cigarettes within 25 feet of a playground or tot lot sandbox area.

Calabasas City Councilman Barry Groveman said the evidence is now irrefutable that secondhand smoke is very dangerous and cities, counties, states and the federal government need to take action to protect the public.

"Since we passed our law in Calabasas, we've seen similar laws developing all over the world," Groveman said. "I'm not exaggerating, whether it's in Burbank or Beverly Hills or Santa Monica. It's been considered in Paris and Australia. We are simply a few years away from being amazed this took so long."

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