

Comments to the Montana Economic Affairs Interim Committee (EAIC)

September 26, 2023

From: Liz Albers, State Government Relations Director, Montana and Wyoming, American Heart Association

Re: Marijuana Consumption Lounges

Dear Members of the Montana Economic Affairs Committee,

The American Heart Association's mission is to be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. Accordingly, we stand firmly against any erosion or violation of Montana's Clean Indoor Air Act (MT CIAA) and urge the committee to do so as well.

The MT CIAA provides its intent in statute, stating its purpose as:

- (1) to protect the public health and welfare by prohibiting smoking in public places and places of employment;
- (2) to recognize the right of nonsmokers to breathe smoke-free air; and
- (3) to recognize that the need to breathe smoke-free air has priority over the desire to smoke.

Allowing for loopholes, exceptions and carve outs does a disservice to all Montanans, especially employees who work in establishments that run afoul of the MT CIAA. Therefore, the American Heart Association supports inclusion of marijuana in all comprehensive smoke-free air laws.

Marijuana smoke contains many of the same carcinogens and mutagens as tobacco smoke. The average emission rate of pre-rolled marijuana joints is 3.5 times the average emission rate of Marlboro tobacco cigarettes.¹ Such exposure to fine particulate matter can cause cardiovascular disease, lung irritation, asthma attacks and makes respiratory infections more likely.

Smoking marijuana in indoor places exposes the public and workers to these dangerous secondhand smoke emissions. Further, allowing for marijuana consumption lounges normalizes marijuana smoking at a time when marijuana use has risen considerably particularly among individuals 18-25 years of age.²

I thank you all for your time and attention on this matter and urge you to proceed in a way that supports the intent of Montana's Clean Indoor Air Act.

Sincerely,

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¹ Ott, WR., Zhao, T., Cheng, KC., Wallace, LA., Hildemann, LM. Measuring indoor fine particle concentrations, emission rates, and rates from cannabis use in a residence. Atmospheric Environment: X. Volume 10. April 2021. 100106.

² Page, RL., Allen, LA., Kloner, RA., Carriker, CR., Martel, C., Morris, AA., Piano, MR., Rana, JS., Saucedo, JF., Medical Marijuana, Recreational Cannabis, and Cardiovascular Health: A Scientific Statement from the American Heart Association. Circulation. 2020; XX.