



June 12, 2019

The Honorable J.B. Pritzker
Governor, State of Illinois
Office of the Governor
207 State House
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the Illinois State Medical Society (ISMS), I write to urge you to sign House Bill 2276. This bill would prohibit smoking in a motor vehicle with a minor present, an important protection for the health of the children of Illinois.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure, and even brief exposure can be harmful to health. Health problems due to secondhand smoke exposure have led to death in approximately 2,500,000 nonsmokers since 1964. The dangers associated with secondhand smoke have led to widespread regulation of smoking in public places, and a resultant decrease in exposure to secondhand smoke. Data indicates that from 1988 to 2012 as many of these laws regulating public smoking were passed, nonsmokers showed a more than 60% decrease in exposure to secondhand smoke.¹

More can and must be done to protect children from secondhand smoke. Children who are exposed to secondhand smoke are particularly prone to:

- Ear infections
- Severe asthma attacks of increasing frequency
- Bronchitis, pneumonia, and other respiratory infections
- A greater risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Respiratory symptoms like increased coughing, sneezing, and shortness of breath²

Studies have shown that the majority of parents who smoke exposed their children to smoke in cars³, and that after passing a smoke-free vehicle law in California, the proportion of students

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_facts/index.htm. Retrieved June 7, 2019.

² Ibid.

³ Nabi-Burza E, Regan S, Drehmer J, et al. Parents Smoking in Their Cars With Children Present. *Pediatrics*. 2012;130(6). doi:10.1542/peds.2012-0334d.

reporting exposure to smoking in cars declined at a much higher rate than in previous years and in other states without similar laws.⁴

Thus far, eight other states and Puerto Rico have passed laws restricting smoking in cars with children. House Bill 2276 received overwhelming, bipartisan support in both the Illinois Senate and the House. National polls have shown support for banning smoking in cars with children present,⁵ even among smokers.⁶

On behalf of the physicians of Illinois, ISMS respectfully asks that you sign House Bill 2276 into law.

Sincerely,

Richard C. Anderson, M.D.
Chair, Board of Trustees
Illinois State Medical Society

cc: Paul E. Pedersen, M.D.
Robert W. Panton, M.D.
Alexander R. Lerner

⁴ Patel M, Thai CL, Meng Y-Y, et al. Smoke-Free Car Legislation and Student Exposure to Smoking. *Pediatrics*. 2018;141(Supplement 1). doi:10.1542/peds.2017-1026h.

⁵ <https://mottpoll.org/reports-surveys/broad-public-support-banning-smoking-vehicles-kids-present>. Accessed June 10, 2019.

⁶ Hitchman SC, Fong GT, Zanna MP, Hyland A, Bansal-Travers M. Support and correlates of support for banning smoking in cars with children: findings from the ITC Four Country Survey. *Eur J Public Health*. 2011;21(3):360–365. doi:10.1093/eurpub/ckq097.