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Bob Taft, Governor
J. Nick Baird M.D., Director

STATEMENT

For Immediate Release
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Office of Public Affairs • (614) 644-8562
Jay Carey, Director

ODH DIRECTOR CLARIFIES SMOKING BAN CONFUSION

COLUMBUS – Ohio Department of Health Director J. Nick Baird, M.D., today issued the following statement to clear the air over confusion surrounding implementation of Ohio’s indoor smoking ban.

“Despite rumors and some news reports to the contrary, the Ohio smoking ban is alive and well. The law took effect Dec. 7 and remains in effect today. Under the language of the law passed on Nov. 7, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is not able to levy any fines until the enforcement mechanisms are in place. During this implementation period, ODH will follow up on all notices of potential violations with an informational letter reminding businesses of their obligations under the law. This implementation period is NOT a grace period. This implementation period will give Ohio businesses the opportunity to better understand how to comply with the smoking ban. Some 280,000 Ohio businesses, as of Dec. 7, are required to prohibit smoking, remove ashtrays and other smoking receptacles and post no-smoking signs with the number for reporting violations – 866-559-OHIO. Enforcement begins sometime this spring, once the rules are in place. Ohio voters overwhelmingly approved this law, giving me, as the director of health, the responsibility of implementing and enforcing this law. I take this responsibility seriously and assure my fellow Ohioans we will work diligently to fashion equitable enforcement rules that protect Ohioans from the dangers of secondhand smoke.”

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