

# State to assume local enforcement of smoking ban

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Following the Logan County District Board of Health's decision last month for the agency to stop enforcing the statewide smoking ban, area residents and business owners have expressed concern over the issue.

"I received several calls a day regarding why we did it and how it will be enforced," said Craig Kauffman, director of environmental health, at Wednesday's health board meeting.

Because the health district opted out of the responsibility — an option permissible under the law — as a result of financial constraints, the Ohio Department of Health is now charged with enforcement.

"There was a lag in time between our return of the program and when the Ohio Department of Health began enforcement, but now they have taken it over and should be investigating locally any day now," Mr. Kauffman said.

"While we (the LCHD) tried to stress education and understanding (of the law), the ODH will move immediately to the civil penalties due to their workload."

According to Mr. Kauffman, local business owners who receive civil penalties will have to travel to Columbus to attend appeal hearings. Dr. Boyd Hoddinott, health commissioner, said the health board's decision Wednesday to reduce overtime compensation for agency employees would have made local enforcement of the ban even more difficult.

"To hand out citations, we usually had to go out during the evening and the state requires two individuals (from the health district) to go to the site, so you're looking at a lot of overtime pay with every citation.

"Now they (ODH) will have to issue citations, in the evening or otherwise

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