

**EDUCATION ON HAZARDS OF INVOLUNTARY SMOKING**

Adopted by Convention Delegates April 1987

- WHEREAS,** The 1986 report of the Surgeon General of the United States concluded that involuntary smoking is a cause of disease, including lung cancer and other respiratory diseases; and
- WHEREAS,** The report further concludes that the separation of smokers and non-smokers within the same air space may reduce, but does not eliminate, the exposure of non-smokers to environmental tobacco smoke; and
- WHEREAS,** The report also states that the children of parents who smoke, compared with the children of non-smoking parents, have an increased frequency of respiratory infections, increases in other respiratory symptoms, and slightly smaller rates of increase in lung functions as the lung matures; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the National PTA and its constituent bodies increase efforts to educate the public about the dangers of involuntary smoking; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the National PTA and its constituent bodies seek and support additional legislation to protect the rights of non-smokers; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the National PTA participate in media public service and campaigns to educate the public about the dangers of involuntary smoking and its effects on a child's development.

\* Commonly known as secondary or second-hand or passive smoke/smoking.

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## BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The California State PTA and the National PTA are committed to cooperating in the health education of children, youth, parents and the community. **This is the first time the report of the U.S. Surgeon General documents the dangerous effects of involuntary or passive smoking.** Dr. E. Everett Koop, Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service, said, **“passive or involuntary smoking is a major health hazard that affects millions of non-smokers.”**

The American Cancer Society states that people who are exposed to others' tobacco smoke, called sidestream smoke, absorb nicotine, carbon monoxide and other constituents just as smokers do, although in smaller amounts. Research has shown that **tar and nicotine are found in greater concentrations in sidestream than in mainstream smoke inhaled directly.**

Smoking during pregnancy has a direct, growth-retarding effect on the fetus, and may adversely affect the child's long-term growth, intellectual developments and behavior. The risk of spontaneous abortion (miscarriage), fetal death and neonatal death increases directly the more a woman smokes during pregnancy. An infant's risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is also increased by maternal smoking during pregnancy.

There is growing evidence linking passive smoking with lung cancer and heart disease. Involuntary smoking may worsen symptomatic coronary heart disease and increase the risk of cardiac death. Sidestream smoke contains substantial levels of carbon monoxide that in closed, poorly ventilated environments can be three times greater than recommended levels. These elevated levels interfere with the blood's capacity to carry oxygen, thus increasing the risk of heart attack or stroke.

The Environmental Protection Agency has found that carbon monoxide has so saturated America's blood that nearly half of non-smokers have more of it in their systems than federal safety standards would allow.

The American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association and the American Lung Association have endorsed the 1986 Report of the Surgeon General of the United States, “The Health Consequences of Involuntary Smoking,” and view the findings highly significant because virtually every American is affected. The overview statement in the report includes the major findings: **Inhalation of tobacco smoke during active cigarette smoking remains the largest single preventable cause of death and disability for the United States population. The report documents the health consequence of involuntary or passive smoking.**