



March 25, 2019

The Honorable Dan Romero  
Members of the Hercules City Council  
111 Civic Drive  
Hercules, CA 94547

Dear Mayor Romero and Members of the Hercules City Council:

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network is committed to protecting the health and well-being of the citizens of Hercules, and as such, supports the creation and implementation of smoke-free protections for all multi-unit housing (MUH) residents—those who live in apartments as well as condominiums. No one should have their health put at risk by others, including their neighbors, and those risks are the same, whether housing is rented or owned.

The negative health effects of secondhand smoke exposure are well documented; secondhand smoke contains at least 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds that are toxic. The U.S. Surgeon General has declared that there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Even brief exposure to secondhand smoke can cause serious health effects, especially for the very young, the elderly, or those who are ill. Smoke-free laws, such as those that eliminate smoking in multi-unit housing, reduce exposure to secondhand smoke and reduce the incidence of cancer, heart disease, and other conditions caused by exposure to smoke, as well as prevent the worsening of symptoms among people who already suffer from those conditions.

Living in MUH requires different standards of behavior due to shared walls and common spaces. Smoke-free policies are added to the lease and communicated to tenants in the same way other lease provisions are communicated. Signs should be posted on the property, and residents are made aware of the penalties for violating this provision of their lease. Enforcement of smoke-free policies is very much like enforcement of all other lease conditions.

Prohibiting smoking in MUH improves the quality of life and helps to protect the health of nonsmoking residents by preventing the unintentional exposure that many receive as the result of smoking neighbors. More than 80% of Californians completely prohibit smoking in their homes, and yet, in MUH, one smoking resident can expose the neighbors in all surrounding units. Californians are making wiser choices for themselves and their families, and they should not have to endure being exposed to the smoke of others.

Contra Costa County has passed an ordinance that protects MUH residents in the unincorporated county, and we are encouraged that Hercules has again chosen to discuss this issue for the residents of Hercules. Everyone has the right to breathe clean air, especially in their own homes. ACS CAN urges this council to protect all residents who live in MUH within the City of Hercules by creating an ordinance that would prohibit all smoking in MUH units, on balconies, patios, and in common areas, as well as within all hotel rooms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cassie Ray".

Cassie Ray  
Government Relations Director, Northern California  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network