



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –
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County Health Department Receives First Complaints From New Smoke-Free Law

FAYETTEVILLE – A week into North Carolina’s smoke-free restaurants and bars law, Cumberland County Health Department has received 12 complaints against specific restaurants and bars for follow-up and investigation.

“The small number of complaints in this first report confirms our predictions that Cumberland County businesses are, for the most part, fully complying with the law,” said Health Director Buck Wilson. “We appreciate their cooperation.”

The law, which went into effect on Jan. 2, requires all bars and restaurants in the state to be smoke-free. There are limited exceptions for cigar bars and non-profit private clubs, such as patriotic clubs and some country clubs. Lodging establishments must also restrict smoking and may reserve no more than 20 percent of their rooms for smoking.

Complaints were logged by residents calling the N.C. CARE-LINE , visiting www.smokefree.nc.gov Web site, or calling their local health department to report businesses for not following the law’s requirements of posting no-smoking signs, removing ashtrays and asking patrons who light up to put their cigarettes or other burning tobacco products out.

Local health departments, which have the authority to enforce the law, began receiving complaint reports weekly when the law went into effect. A report of the complaints will also be posted each Tuesday on www.smokefree.nc.gov.

Of the 12 total complaints received by the county since the law was implemented, three reported a lack of appropriate non-smoking signs and nine reported businesses allowing smoking to continue.

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“We have followed up with the businesses named in the complaints,” Wilson said. “Since this is a new law for everyone to learn, we will provide education and assistance to these businesses, and do all we can to help businesses comply. Some establishments are confused about the definition of a private club. They don’t realize the new law applies to them. We have education materials to share, and even free no-smoking signs and coasters.”

Businesses and residents can also download information at www.smokefree.nc.gov, including fact sheets, frequently asked questions and answers, and no-smoking signs.

There are three ways to report a possible business violation of the law:

- (1) Call the local health director at 910-433-3707;
- (2) Visit www.smokefree.nc.gov and complete an on-line form;
- (3) Call the N.C. CARE-LINE at 1-800-662-7030 (TTY 1-877-452-2514), which is open 7 a.m. – 11 p.m., seven days a week. CARE-LINE services are available in over 150 languages. After hours, you may leave a message and your call will be returned.