

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: Third Hand Smoke the Untold Story

According to a recent University of Florida study over half of Americans who don't smoke are exposed to tobacco, but only one-third are aware of it. Researchers reviewed prevalence of underreported nicotine exposure data from the 2013-2020 National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys of 13, 503 adults aged 18 and older and found that 51% of nonsmoking people had nicotine in their blood. This is a sign of nicotine exposure. Only one-third thought they had been exposed to nicotine; the other two-thirds were not. Individuals with underreported nicotine exposure were defined as those who reported no exposure to all tobacco products-traditional tobacco, nicotine replacements, and e-cigarettes.

Between 2013-2020, the prevalence of self-reported second hand smoke (SHS) exposure, serum cotinine-assessed nicotine exposure, and underreported nicotine exposure among US nonsmokers were 22.0%, 51.2%, and 34.6%, respectively. Remarkably, 67.6% with detectable serum cotinine reported no SHS exposure. Males, non-Hispanic Blacks, individuals of other races (including Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders), and those without cardiovascular diseases were more likely to underreport nicotine exposure than their counterparts. The median serum cotinine value was higher in respondents who reported SHS exposure (0.107 ng/ml) than in those who reported no exposure (0.035 ng/ml). They estimated that approximately 56 million US residents had underreported nicotine exposure.: Over a third of US nonsmokers underreport their nicotine exposure, emphasizing the immediate need for a robust comprehensive public awareness campaigns and interventions. It was concluded that further research into sociodemographic determinants influencing this underreporting is warranted.

The data suggests Americans are exposed to tobacco smoke and don't know it. SHS poses a significant health risk. Alarming, individuals who do not smoke may be unaware of their exposure, thereby failing to take protective actions promptly.

A possible reason for this enormous knowledge gap could be that Americans aren't knowledgeable on the dangers of thirdhand smoke, the chemical residue from tobacco smoke that sticks on and embeds in surfaces. Thirdhand smoke can be hidden and is odorless. When it is released into the air off of surfaces innocent people can ingest it, absorb it through their skin, and inhale it. People exposed to thirdhand smoke can transport it on their skin, hair, and clothes to smokefree places. Furniture, carpet, and household objects can carry it, too.

Too many members of the public might assume they are safe from tobacco smoke exposure if they are not around anyone smoking, i.e., secondhand smoke. Since thirdhand smoke is sticky

and can be carried, people could be exposed to tobacco smoke chemicals in places where anyone smoked in the past or people visited after smoking.

Upon additional research it demonstrated that compared to the number of Americans who consider secondhand smoke dangerous, fewer Americans do not consider thirdhand smoke bad for their health. Some don't know about it. Understanding the extent of underreported nicotine exposure is a critical factor for developing effective public health environmental strategies, education and prevention interventions. It's urgent to bolster public consciousness about the risks associated with SHS. Further, surveillance tools should also incorporate measures of exposure to outdoor SHS and e-cigarette vapor to enhance the quality of data monitoring and understanding the value of smoke free outdoor air protections and practices. The researchers suggest findings from this study can guide tobacco control initiatives and inform municipal leaders about the benefits of smoke-free air policies.

Their study findings may explain why millions of Americans are unaware of their exposure. Tobacco exposure and its resulting health symptoms disproportionately affect the most vulnerable and families facing inequities in access to health care. Weak smoke free property disclosure policies do not include smoking history and make it difficult for families to buy or rent smokefree homes. Smoke-free Multiple Unit Dwelling offers protection from these toxins. Smoking bans are effective in protecting the public from Americans being exposed to second- and thirdhand smoke. Increasing public knowledge and prevention education about tobacco exposure is fundamental to addressing these public health issues.

SAFE and its community partners are promoting their new campaign "Live Safe" with the goal of the City will embracing a healthy substance free lifestyle, while continuing their ongoing efforts with the Tobacco Action Coalition of advancing a Tobacco Free City.

For Quit help the NYS Smoker' Quitline provides free and confidential services that include information, tools, quit coaching, and support in both English and Spanish. Services are available by calling 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487), texting (716) 309-4688, or visiting www.nysmokefree.com, for information, to chat online with a Quit Coach, or to sign up for [Learn2QuitNY](#), a six-week, step-by-step text messaging program to build the skills you need to quit any tobacco product. Individuals aged 13 to 24 can text "DropTheVape" to 88709 to receive age-appropriate quit assistance.

Please visit the American Lung Association on their Website at: www.americanlung.org. For help Quitting smoking/vaping or to help a loved one beat a nicotine addiction. The Lung HelpLine, is available via phone or online and is ready to assist teens between the ages of 13 -17 in quitting tobacco, including vaping. Call 800-LUNGUSA or chat online through their website at Lung.org.

SAFE is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention, and education agency in the City of Glen Cove. Its Coalition is concerned about tobacco use, marijuana use and vaping. The Coalition seeks to educate and update the community regarding its negative consequences in collaboration with Carol Meschkow, Manager- Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island. To learn

more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition or visit the Vaping Facts and Myths Page or Underage Marijuana Use Awareness Campaign pages of SAFE's website to learn more about how smoking/vaping is detrimental to your health www.safeglencove.org