

# Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition



Volume 2, Issue 1, September 2010

## MOTAC Annual Meeting

The Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition held its annual meeting on Tuesday, August 3, 2010 at the American Cancer Society, located at 9850 Nicholas Street. The annual meeting was held to elect the 2010-2011 Executive Committee, review past accomplishments, renew membership, and to approve the annual report.

This year's newly elected MOTAC Executive Committee is as follows:

**President**-Vickie Young, **Vice President**-Paul Carter, **Secretary**-Christine Stewart, **Treasurer**-Tamicka Bradley, **Media Chairperson**-Mary Crosby, and **Clean Air Chairperson**-Hanneka Brown.

Accomplishments from 2009-2010 included the “**Rent Smoke-Free**” media campaign that was developed to educate and encourage landlords and property owners to implement smoke-free policies; quarterly tobacco compliance checks for sales to minors that have remained below 5.9%; increased communications with policymakers at both state and local levels; the formation of the

Cultural Competency Network which provides training opportunities to alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention coalitions; the completion of the MOTAC website in both English and Spanish; and the hiring of the new coalition development coordinator, Melanie Ogomo, whose duties include the management of the MOTAC website, newsletter, and list-serve.

MOTAC currently has 40 members, both active and advocate, representing 25 different organizations from the community. The coalition continues to look at ways to increase membership and recruit volunteers. One strategy identified by the Executive Committee was the development of the MOTAC Membership Toolkit, which was distributed at the annual meeting.

Upon review, the annual report was approved with the intention of sharing the report with policymakers, community, faith-based leaders, and key partners in tobacco prevention.

MOTAC is looking forward to another year of fighting tobacco through community action!

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## Tobacco Compliance Checks

In June 2010, MOTAC in collaboration with PRIDE-Omaha, Inc. and local law enforcement, have completed the another round of tobacco compliance checks. Cooperating minors assist with the checks, use their own identification, and make no attempt to look over the legal purchase age.

### Results:

From April – June 2010, 889 compliance checks were completed in Douglas County. Of those, 31 tobacco retailers illegally sold tobacco to minors, representing a **3.4%** failure rate.

## MOTAC Membership Kits

MOTAC is known for addressing tobacco-related issues through public policy and education. Working toward the goals of reducing tobacco use, reducing exposure to secondhand smoke, and building capacity from diverse groups within our community is a collaborative effort by all members. It takes dedication, commitment and a pool of talent to make change happen.

When you choose to become a member of MOTAC you will receive a Membership Kit. The kit is designed to increase your awareness of coalition initiatives; provide you with volunteer, networking and committee opportunities; and give you tools to share MOTAC's message with your community. To learn more about membership and coalition meetings, please call MOTAC Coordinator Melanie Ogomo at (402) 505-4617.



August kicked off MOTAC's annual membership drive. We have had 22 membership forms turned in so far this year. We hope you will consider becoming either an active or advocate member to help support MOTAC in our tobacco control efforts in the coming year. You can find a membership form on our website [www.motac.org/AboutUs.aspx](http://www.motac.org/AboutUs.aspx).

## Secondhand Smoke

Secondhand smoke is defined as the smoke that comes from the burning end of a cigarette and the smoke that is exhaled by a smoker. Secondhand smoke also comes from bidis, hookahs, pipes and cigars.

Health problems related to secondhand smoke include lung cancer, stroke, heart disease, and breathing problems. Children who are exposed to this toxin can develop bronchitis, pneumonia, ear infections, colds, allergies, and asthma. Babies that have parents who smoke are twice as likely to die from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Smoking in your home or car with a window open does not effectively let the smoke out.

Particles in the smoke stay in the air, dust and upholstery for weeks or even months. Cigarettes don't just harm people but the butts are a big source of litter which pollute the water and harm animals. Children pick up the butts and it can be a choking hazard and a poison risk. Many large fires are started by cigarettes.

Have you ever smelled smoke on clothes, hair, furniture, and carpets? A person does not have to be a smoker or even be near a smoker to be exposed to harmful toxins. Third-hand smoke is a term meaning the toxins from a cigarette smoke that stick to the soft surfaces of things that we touch everyday.

If you are a smoker, please go outside your home or car. Make sure that after you are finished to dispose of your cigarette butts properly, so not to litter or cause fires. Wash your hands as soon as you are finished and remove your jacket and leave it outside to air out. Make sure to bathe, wash clothes, and clean carpets often. For nonsmokers, stay away from people smoking and teach your children to play away from smoking areas. If you cannot move, politely ask the smoker to move or put out their cigarette.

## Smoke-Free Housing Option

MOTAC's Media Committee focused on designing and implementing a campaign to address landlords and property owners. MOTAC members developed a message to include the positive impacts of implementing a smoke-free policy to their bottom line. To generate interest and increase awareness of the resources available to landlords and property owners, MOTAC developed a five minute informative video with Cox Media titled, *Smoke-Free Housing Options*. The video can be found in English and in Spanish subtitles on MOTAC's sister web page, [www.rentsmokefree.org](http://www.rentsmokefree.org).



*A better choice for everyone.*

## In the Community



Students at the Minority Youth Congress held on June 10th at the Kroc Center.



Latinas Tabaco y Cáncer (LTC) Computer Course

## Did You know?

- Smokers inhale 15% of smoke, 85% goes into the air.
- Every year secondhand smoke causes more than 3,000 lung cancer deaths in nonsmokers.
- 45,000 people die every year from heart disease related to secondhand smoke.
- Children exposed to secondhand smoke have an increased risk for leukemia, lymphoma and brain tumors.
- 60% of U.S. children are exposed to secondhand smoke
- Secondhand smoke leads to 300,000 cases of pneumonia and bronchitis in children every year.
- Smoke-free homes mean less time and money spent on cleaning and a better smelling home.
- 16.7% of Nebraskans smoke
- Through third-hand smoke, people can be exposed to the same toxins as a smoker.

Sources: Tobacco Free Nebraska, PRIDE, Omaha..

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**3801 Harney Street**

**Omaha, NE 68131**

Phone: 402-546-1099

Fax: 402-444-7722

E-mail: [info@motac.org](mailto:info@motac.org)

Website: [www.motac.org](http://www.motac.org)

[www.motac.org/spanish](http://www.motac.org/spanish)

**Fighting Tobacco Through  
Community Action!**

**Partners/Members:**

- Alegent Health System
- American Cancer Society
- American Lung Association
- Christ Cathedral
- Creighton Cardiac Center
- Douglas County Health Department
- Douglas County Housing
- Girl Scouts Spirit Nebraska
- Gray Group, Inc.
- Group to Alleviate Smoking Pollution of Nebraska (GASP-NE)
- Hidden Hills Health & Rehab
- Iowa Western Community College
- LiveWise Coalition
- New Creations, Inc.
- No Limits
- Omaha Police Department
- Omaha Public Schools
- Pfizer
- PRIDE-Omaha, Inc.
- Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare
- Setting the Captives Free
- Tobacco Free Cass County (TFCC)
- Tobacco Free Nebraska
- Tobacco Free Sarpy (TFS)
- University of Nebraska Medical Center - College of Nursing
- University of Nebraska Medical Center - Center for Reducing Health Disparities
- University of Nebraska Medical Center -Evaluation
- ...and many individuals.

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The **Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition (MOTAC)** is a dynamic coalition comprised of over 50 health related individuals, organizations, and educational groups. MOTAC was formed in 1992 in order to strengthen tobacco control and prevention efforts in the metro Omaha area. Since its inception, MOTAC has taken the lead within Douglas County to address tobacco related issues through public education and community action.

**Mission:** To prevent and reduce tobacco use and the accompanying health and economic consequences in the Omaha area via prevention through public policy and education.

**Goals:** Reduce tobacco use, reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, and increase capacity from diverse groups.

**MOTAC Officers:**    **Vickie Young, President**                      **Paul Carter, Vice President**  
   **Tamicka Bradley, Treasurer**                      **Christine Stewart, Secretary**

**MOTAC meets the first Tuesday of each month at 10:00 am at the American Cancer Society, 9850 Nicholas Street in Omaha.**