

**MMA Physicians Strongly Support the Minnesota Department of Health's Efforts  
to Enforce the Freedom to Breathe Act**

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn., March 5, 2008 – As a strong supporter of the statewide law to protect the public from secondhand smoke, the Minnesota Medical Association (MMA) applauds the Department of Health for its decision to shut down fake “theatrical performances” in bars for violating the Freedom to Breathe Act.

“We are disappointed that a few bars are putting the health of their employees and patrons at risk by faking theatrical performances to get around the law,” said James J. Dehen Jr, M.D., president of the MMA.

Secondhand smoke kills more than 580 Minnesotans each year, and sickens more than 66,000, according to a 2007 study by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, in partnership with the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. Secondhand smoke causes lung cancer, heart disease and respiratory illness.

“The Department of Health should be congratulated for its commitment to enforcing a law that will save lives and improve health,” said Dr. Dehen.