

# Survey of Merced County Residents in Multi-Unit Housing

For many Californians living in multi-unit housing, breathing secondhand smoke drifting from neighboring apartment units, balconies and outdoor areas has become a real health hazard. The increasing awareness of the dangers of secondhand smoke and the acceptability of smoke-free environments are encouraging tenants to seek out smoke-free units and property owners to declare their buildings smoke-free.

In April 2014, the American Lung Association in California commissioned a survey of Merced County residents living in multi-unit housing to gauge the level of support for rules around smoke-free multi-unit housing. Complete results for the survey are available at [center4tobaccopolicy.org/smokefree-housing-ca4health-poll/](http://center4tobaccopolicy.org/smokefree-housing-ca4health-poll/).

## Summary of Key Findings

### • Secondhand Smoke Exposure

Merced County residents know smoke is harmful and have experienced drifting secondhand smoke.

- 94% know that secondhand smoke is harmful to people who inhale it.
- 62% are concerned about the health effects of secondhand smoke drifting into their rental unit.
- 38% have experienced secondhand smoke drift into their unit in the last year.
- 38% already live in a building with rules limiting smoking in either inside or outside the building.

### • Smoking Rules in Multi-Unit Housing

Merced County residents are supportive of rules to protect residents in multi-unit housing from secondhand smoke exposure:



**69%** favor a rule prohibiting smoking in the outdoor common areas of apartments, including swimming pools, play areas, and courtyards



**61%** favor a rule prohibiting smoking inside apartment units.

## Background

CA4Health is the Public Health Institute's Community Transformation Grant, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, that is focused on reducing the burden of chronic disease in California counties with populations under 500,000. CA4Health partners with some of the state's leading technical assistance providers and content experts to provide local county partners with tools, training and guidance to make their communities healthier. CA4Health's four strategic directions are reducing consumption of sugary beverages, increasing availability of smoke-free housing, creating safe routes to schools, and providing people with chronic disease with skills and resources to better manage their health.

CA4Health worked with the American Lung Association in California to increase the availability of smoke-free housing options. As part of that effort, the Lung Association conducted polling in the 12 counties that are part of the CA4Health Community Transformation Grant (Calaveras, Humboldt, Imperial, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Monterey, Shasta, Siskiyou, Solano, Tulare, and Tuolumne).

## Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted by Goodwin Simon Strategic Research. This survey data represents information acquired from Merced County residents in multi-unit housing by telephone interview, including both land lines and wireless numbers. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, with about 2% of the interviews conducted in Spanish. The margin of error is plus or minus 7.63% at a 95% confidence level. The survey was conducted between April 10 and April 22, 2014.



*CA4Health is a project of the Public Health Institute, with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If you have any questions, please contact the CA4Health program at the Public Health Institute.*