



NEWS

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CORDRAY, OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SUE OHIO ESTABLISHMENTS FOR SMOKING BAN VIOLATIONS

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) — Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray and Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Alvin D. Jackson, M.D., today announced the first lawsuits filed against Ohio establishments for violations of the Smoke-free Workplace Act. Complaints were filed in Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas against O’Neal’s Tavern in Cincinnati and in Franklin County Court of Common Pleas against Zeno’s in Columbus.

The complaints seek a court order requiring the bars to comply with the state smoking ban. The suits were brought against these establishments because of their repeated and extensive violations over the last two years. According to court documents, O’Neal’s Tavern has been cited for 12 violations accruing fines of more than \$21,000, and Zeno’s has been cited for nine violations and fines of more than \$28,000.

“The issue at hand is clear disregard for Ohio law,” said Cordray. “These establishments have been warned and fined repeatedly over a two-year period to no avail. They continuously push the limits and have given us no alternative but to seek the court’s intervention.”

In November 2006, Ohioans passed the Smoke Free Act, making Ohio the 12th state to protect all workers and the public from exposure to secondhand smoke in public places. Enforcement began May 3, 2007. Since then, more than 44,000 allegations have been called in to Ohio’s toll-free enforcement number, (866) 559-OHIO (6446).

With more than 280,000 public places and places of employment covered by the indoor smoking ban, Jackson noted the vast majority of Ohio businesses are complying with the law. Still, he added, ODH and its partners at Ohio’s local health departments will aggressively investigate all complaints in their efforts to protect and improve the health of all Ohioans. To date, more than 3,100 warning letters have been issued to violators and more than 1,800 fines assessed.

“We take our commitment to enforcing the will of Ohio’s voters seriously, and these filings illustrate that,” Jackson said. “Businesses must comply with the Ohio Smoke-free Workplace Act by prohibiting smoking, removing ashtrays and posting no-smoking signs with Ohio’s toll-free enforcement number.”

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