FROM:  American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Heart Association, American Lung Association, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Health First Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association

TO:      Members of the Wisconsin

DATE:  November 20, 2013

RE:      Opposition to LRB 1844: Exempting Electronic Cigarettes from the Smoke-free Law

On behalf of our health organizations, we are writing to express opposition to LRB 1844/1 that would exempt electronic cigarettes from our state's smoke-free air law.  Creating a special exemption for e- cigarettes risks opening up the long-fought for and extremely popular smoke-free law to potential weakening amendments and sends a misleading message that these new products are safe to consume.

It's clear Wisconsin's smoke-free law is working; hospitality workers' health is improving and the public has embraced and adapted to the change. In fact, the most recent poll on the issue found 75 percent of Wisconsin voters support the law and want it to remain in place.

What remains unclear however, are the potential health effects of e-cigarettes.  These devices allow users to mimic the ritual of smoking a cigarette without burning tobacco. Instead, users inhale vapor containing nicotine, flavor additives, and other chemicals.

1. **There is no scientific evidence that e-cigarettes are safer for consumers than regular tobacco products.** In fact, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) conducted a study in 2009, which found that e - cigarettes contained carcinogens and toxic chemicals, including the ingredients found in anti-freeze.

2. **The long-term health effects of such products on both the users _and_ those around them remain unknown.** The FDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Academy of Pediatrics have all voiced their concern that electronic cigarettes could lead to an increase in nicotine addiction and youth tobacco use.  In addition, e-cigarettes do not include any health warnings, unlike conventional cigarettes and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products.

3. **Contrary to claims by some manufacturers, e-cigarettes are not among the proven ways to help smokers quit.** The U.S. Public Health Service has found that that the seven therapies approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in combination with individual or group cessation counseling is the most effective way to help smokers quit.   Until and unless the FDA approves a specific e-cigarette for use as a tobacco cessation aid, our organizations do not support any direct or implied claims to that effect.

4. **Lastly, rule-making authorities are prudently restricting exposure to e cigarettes rather than risking potential health problems.**  The U.S. Department of Transportation recently proposed a rule to ban e cigarettes from airlines, Amtrak has banned the use of electronic smoking devices on trains and in any area where smoking is prohibited, the Air Force Surgeon General issued a memorandum highlighting the safety concerns regarding electronic cigarettes and placed them in the same category as tobacco products, and the U.S. Navy has banned them below decks in submarines.

For these reasons and more, our organizations oppose exempting e-cigarettes from our smoke-free air law. Please oppose this exemption, protect our statewide smoke-free air law and the health of the people of Wisconsin.

For further information about this statement, please contact the following staff at the signing organizations:
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network: Allison Miller, (608)662-7559 Allison.Miller@cancer.org
Health First Wisconsin: Melissa Horn, (314)952-4742 mhorn@healthfirstwi.org
American Lung Association: Dona Wininsky, (262)703-4840 Dona.Wininsky@lung.org
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids: Kevin O'Flaherty, (646)919-0469 KOFlaherty@TobaccoFreeKids.org
American Heart Association: Chris Klein, (608)320-9026 chris.klein@heart.org
Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association: Lisa Davidson, (608) 443-2953, ldavidson@wphca.org