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**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION APPLAUDS
GOVERNOR ROUNDS' SIGNING OF SMOKE-FREE LEGISLATION**

SIOUX FALLS, SD – March 19, 2009 – The South Dakota State Medical Association (SDSMA) applauds South Dakota Governor Mike Rounds for signing HB 1240, the smoke-free legislation.

The law will protect the health of South Dakotans by adding to the existing ban on smoking in other businesses and public buildings. Tobacco shops, currently existing cigar bars and lodging rooms will be exempt from the ban.

“It’s a great day for South Dakota,” said SDSMA President Cynthia A. Weaver, MD. “We are thrilled Governor Rounds has chosen to protect South Dakotans from the hazards of secondhand smoke.”

The smoke-free law will take effect July 1. The SDSMA is encouraging business owners across the state to make their establishments smoke-free before the deadline.

“The smoke-free law will finally protect a group of South Dakota workers at high risk. Restaurant, bar and casino workers involuntarily inhale enough secondhand smoke to suffer some of the same health effects seen in people who smoke one pack of cigarettes a day,” Weaver said. “We encourage business owners to start protecting those employees now, rather than waiting until July.”

The SDSMA serves more than 1,900 physician members who are dedicated to the health of South Dakotans. The mission of the SDSMA is to promote the art and science of medicine, to protect and improve the health of the public and provide leadership and advocacy in the field of quality health care.

Learn more about the SDSMA at www.sdsma.org.

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