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**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION URGES VOTERS
TO UPHOLD SMOKE-FREE LEGISLATION**

SIoux FALLS, SD – June 17, 2009 – The South Dakota State Medical Association (SDSMA) urges voters to uphold HB 1240, the smoke-free legislation signed by Gov. Mike Rounds in March.

The law - which is to take effect July 1 - 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.

While a petition drive to put the measure to a vote on the 2010 ballot is currently ongoing, the SDSMA encourages voters to support the legislation and allow it to take effect July 1.

“South Dakotans already have spoken on their desire for smoke-free workplaces,” said SDSMA President Cynthia A. Weaver, MD. “Our elected state legislators were inundated with requests and pleas from constituents who supported the smoke-free legislation, and our legislators listened to constituents and voted to protect public health.”

The SDSMA also is encouraging business owners across the state to make their establishments smoke-free ahead of the July 1 deadline.

“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.

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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