



NEW JERSEY  
**GASP INC.**  
Group Against Smoking Pollution

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### LETTERS FOR SMOKEFREE HOSPITALS

This is a digest<sup>®</sup> of approximately 135 letters addressed to the Health Care Administration Board via New Jersey GASP. These synopses were written by Regina Carlson, Executive Director, New Jersey GASP.

November 28 Roslyn W. Rusinow West Caldwell

Save sick people from the added burden of smoky air.

November 29 Arlene R. Bruskin, Ph.D. Dumont

Hospitals are supposed to be places where people get well. There is absolutely no justification for permitting a health facility to compromise the health of the public.

November 29 Trudy Drucker, Ph.D. River Vale

Hospitals are places of healing. They should not be sites where cancer is generated by cigarette smoke.

November 29 Diane W. Dunn North Haledon

As a hospital patient I suffered an asthma attack (which is very rare for me) because of smoking by visitors.

November 29 Norman Erlichman Teaneck

As a pharmacist at Englewood Hospital, which went smokefree this year, I am relieved from the sore eyes and throat that used to affect me. I've also seen many smoking employees quit and heard much praise for the new policy. I see no reason why a health facility should permit an acknowledged harmful situation to occur.

November 29 Virginia Hudson, R.N. Shrewsbury

Air is the first and foremost requirement of every person. Secondhand smoke contains carbon monoxide which robs oxygen from the body. Hospital patients need all the oxygen they can get.

November 29 Mary Ellen Mertz Ridgewood

Please act to prevent smoking in facilities dedicated to wellness.

November 29 Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Slimm Jackson

Persons in hospitals are there because of being ill. They certainly do not need tobacco smoke to add to their problems. It is also a dangerous fire hazard.

November 29 Allen Strasburger Red Bank

Cigarettes kill. Hospitals are supposed to heal.

November 29 Lawrence J. Tighe, Jr., President, WRNJ radio  
Hackettstown

The absurdity of allowing smoking in hospitals almost precludes it as a possibility. But if the HCAB does agree to allow smoking, we would like to conduct interviews with each board member to have the decision making process explained to us. [WRNJ's facilities have been smokefree for years. Ed.]

November 30 Roger Belling Jersey City

I hope government and the hospitals will cooperate to protect and defend the health and freedom of citizens, not the profit and shamelessness of the tobacco industry.

November 30 Joanne Bradley Cliffside Park

I was made sick in Englewood Hospital by another patient's smoking. Why should someone have the right to do that to a hospital patient?

November 30 Evelyn T. Button Summit

As a hospital Social Worker I suffered from smoke pollution and saw nursing co-workers trapped in their addiction. I'm happy our hospital will go smokefree January 1 and give a new message, "We are here to help you heal yourself."

November 30 Frederick Cezer Millburn

Tobacco industry tactics to allow smoking in hospitals outrage the sensibilities of every citizen by the extraordinary distortion of health care in allowing a practice so destructive

of health to be present in a health care institution.

November 30      Jesse Cherry    Tenafly

In 1989 we don't need any extended arguing of the proposition. The issue was settled long ago by the USPHS.

November 30      Berta G. Ditillo    Union

Smoking is offensive, unhealthy and out of place in a hospital.

November 30      Thomas Ditillo    Union

There is enough hardship in hospitals without having to deal with smoke.

November 30      John S. Fagan    Mountain Lakes

During 1989 my wife had surgery three times at St. Clare's Hospital. I found the lounge reeked of smoke. The furnishing in this relatively new area are saturated with smoke. It's so bad my eyes watered and my nasal passages burned even when no one was smoking.

November 30      Reva Isaacs    Fair Lawn

I was sickened by smoke in a hospital and only through a troublesome and upsetting process, including my doctor's ordering my room changed, did I get protection.

November 30      Jean Kraemer    Maplewood

It is unfair to submit nonsmokers to unhealthy air when they have no choice but must be in a hospital as a patient or visitor. Visiting sick parents in the hospital this year has been extremely stressful to me. Tobacco smoke pollution adds an unreasonable and unnecessary and unhealthy burden.

November 30      Martha Lathrop    Scotch Plains

We recently had to remove our daughter, a post-surgery patient, from Overlook Hospital because of smoke permeating the pediatric unit from the visitor's lounge. The child was still groggy from surgery and without pain medication. I was frightened because I did not feel qualified to give care for her in the event of post-surgery complications. I am incensed that an institution dedicated to the sick should allow an activity that injures the people -- in the case, babies and young children -- it is supposed to aid.

November 30 Annette Loder

I have been hurt by smoke as a hospital patient and nursing home visitor. In the latter case, the smoke was so intense I had to end the visit.

November 30 Fern Relkin Montclair

I heartedly support smokefree hospitals. Let's not go backwards!

November 30 Angela Ruffino Paterson

As a recovering surgical patient in the past, I suffered from air pollution and fear of fire when the patient in the bed next to me smoked. Now as a visitor, I cannot use the lounges in the hospital.

November 30 Donald S. Schneider, P.E. Ridgewood

Considerate smokers would never smoke in a hospital. Who is fighting to allow smoking? Like most dealers of addictive substances, the tobacco industry has enormous funds to spend on these confrontations.

November 30 Carolyn Schwebel, Ed.D. Leonardo

As a psychologist and rehabilitation counselor, I believe that smoking must be outlawed absolutely from hospitals. Both my father and father-in-law had hospitalizations made difficult by tobacco smoke pollution.

November 30 Vince Sclafani Lakehurst

We are a society plagued with problems. This is one we can turn around. Please help us.

November 30 Rosalie Simon Closter

A hospital is a place to rehabilitate the ill. How can smoking be permitted in such an environment?

November 30 Holly Slepman Princeton Junction

My daughter has cystic fibrosis, a genetic disease that affects the lungs. It infuriates me that she is forced to breathe cigarette smoke each month when she visits the hospital; it likely accelerates the lung damage due to her disease.

November 30 Barbara Smith Point Pleasant

A waiting room at Jersey Shore Medical Center gave me a headache from the horrid, stale air. The window was solid brown, covered with sticky residue from smoke.

November 30 Mary D. Swing Woodbury

In Atlantic City Hospital, smoke, including smoke from inconsiderate doctors, forced me to wait outdoors for treatment.

November 30 Mervin Swing, Jr. Woodbury

When hospitalized with a heart attack, I shared a room with the frailest man I have ever seen. He looked about 85. Although we were both on oxygen, he insisted on smoking. I refused to stay in the room and my bed was moved into the hall. The next day the smoker died. I asked a nurse how old that pitiful man was. The reply: 53.

November 30 Donald G. Wallace Spokane, Washington

I never thought I would be writing to ask that our #1 drug problem be kept out of hospitals.

November 30 Doris Woolf Pine Brook

When my husband was dying of cancer we were driven out of hospital lounges by smoke. As a patient taking prescribed walks after surgery I faced clouds of smoke in the halls. How dreadful!

November 30 Phyllis Zatlin East Brunswick

Smokers have an addiction. They deserve our sympathy and support. But they should not be allowed to make others uncomfortable or sick, certainly not in a hospital!

December 1 Judith Lee Azaren Willingboro

With many of our tax dollars being used to subsidize health care for smokers, it is absurd to indulge smokers' unhealthy habits in the very locations where they will be treated when they finally succumb to emphysema, heart attacks, strokes or lung cancer.

December 1 Richard C. Baudisch Bergenfield

My daughter was exposed to smoke in the hospital. Hospitals should be havens to help in getting well.

December 1 Jerry Birenz Ridgewood

In 1987, entering Wayne General Hospital for surgery to remove polyps from my nose, I was told the hospital could not assure me I would not be given a smoking roommate.

December 1 Wallace E. Cowan Teaneck

There is no worse environment to permit smoking than in a hospital.

December 1 Martha B. Darlington New Lisbon

Hospitals should cure, not cause illness. Hospitals should be smokefree for the sake of patients, the staff and for the example this sets for the community. Let our health facilities lead the way.

December 1 Bob Desch South Plainfield

As a hypnosis consultant, most of my clients are smokers seeking to quit who are grateful that hospitals don't allow smoking. As a patient several years ago, I coughed and sneezed so much from smoke that I split open my internal stitches and suffered internal bleeding.

December 1 Valerie W. Esty Princeton

Smoke is good for nobody!

December 1 Michael S. Fey, Ph.D. Morris Plains

Smokefree hospitals will send a message to our youth that smoking is anti-health.

December 1 Sylvia Freeman Roseland

Allowing smoking in institutions that care for sick people is a crime.

December 1 James LaBagnara, Jr., M.D. Paterson

St. Joseph's Hospital became smokefree July 1 and air quality has improved dramatically. Most of the cancer I see in my practice

of head and neck surgery is related to tobacco. Passive smoke hurts my nonsmoking patients. That's why I support smokefree hospitals.

December 1 James LaRegina Plainfield

Smoking in hospitals could lead to fire.

December 1 Elsbeth Lewin Princeton

When I was hospitalized I faced smoke in my room and the lounge. Another patient--with a collapsed lung--offered me refuge in her private room, with the remark, "I have smoked my last cigarette." A rule is necessary. It gets better compliance than a mere personal request.

December 1 V. Lopata Brick

Breathing smoke is not fair to a person who does not smoke for health reasons. I don't hurt smokers, but they hurt me.

December 1 Phyllis MacDougal Summit

I left a hospital earlier than recommended because I was assigned a room with a smoker.

December 1 Jerry McCarty Belleville

A friend with only one lung was subjected to smoking in hospital.

December 1 May Sass New Monmouth

A smokefree hospital can save thousands of dollars on cleanup.

December 1 Annette Schneider Glenwood

I lost my job because of tobacco smoke at work. So I started looking for employment in doctor's offices and hospitals but I find that most of them allow smoking. Please make hospitals smokefree.

December 1 Anne M. Wares Jersey City

I suffer physically and emotionally where smoke is allowed.

December 1 Elizabeth Wilson, R.N., O.C.N., Ed.D. Cedar Grove

As a professor of nursing, I hear complaints of smoking in hospitals. I recently resumed staff nursing on a per diem basis because the local hospital became smokefree.

December 2 Joseph Arone Lawrenceville

As a patient in a hospital, I think there is nothing worse than smoke.

December 2 Gail Rogg Auster and A. Marc Auster Montclair

What a repugnant contradiction for hospitals, which are supposed to preserve health, to allow such an unhealthy practice!

December 2 Carol Becker Woodcliff Lake

It is ludicrous to allow smoking in health facilities.

December 2 Edwin W. Brill Mt. Laurel

As a recuperating throat surgery patient, visiting a relative in the hospital, I was exposed to smoke.

December 2 Joseph W. Cherner New York, New York

I recently read a New York Times story about a fire in a hospital which was started by a smoking patient. Innocent people were hurt. It isn't fair for smokers to hurt innocent people.

December 2 Kenneth W. Howard Middletown

The majority of New Jersey citizens would welcome smokefree hospitals.

December 2 Lotte F. Low Lakewood

I am a hospital volunteer bothered by smoke.

December 2 Patricia A. Rice, R.N. Glen Gardner

As a patient I was nauseated beyond belief by cigarette smoke. As a nurse I have seen cardiac and pulmonary patients having to breathe the smoke of others. Would you allow marijuana or cocaine or alcohol used in hospitals? Why then tobacco which is partially or totally responsible for many being sick?



December 2      Herman Wilensky and Betty Mayer    Cherry Hill

It is unthinkable that we should have to tolerate smoking in a hospital environment.

December 3      Pamela M. Kerr and Christopher L. Kerr    Stockton

Tobacco smoke pollution limits our job choices and where we can eat out, but it's appalling that we're also subjected to tobacco smoke to receive necessary hospital care or to give support to a friend in the hospital.

December 3      Karin Ann Lango    North Bergen

I was recently admitted to the hospital, and had to wait in a smoke-filled emergency room admitting area. My hospital stay was lengthened and caused lost wages.

December 3      Dr. and Mrs. W. Clarke Pfleeger    Glassboro

We have experienced smoke-pollution conditions in five New Jersey hospitals. The administrators in each hospital have refused to eliminate smoking.

December 3      Sandra Rubin    Highland Park

With respiratory ailments being so serious, common sense alone should dictate smokefree health care facilities for people already ill.

December 3      Robert J. Salmon    Blairstown

In 1987, the lobby and main waiting room of Newton Memorial were filled with smoke haze like a nightclub. Now the hospital is smokefree. May it ever remain this way! Wishing you all a pleasant holiday season.

December 3      Louise M. Sides    Clark

My granddaughter, a patient in Children's Specialized Hospital, suffered from smoke at the entrance and was effective in getting the smoking area relocated. Please ban smoking in hospitals and on the grounds.

December 4      Samuel B. Burgess, M. D.    Medford

As a pathologist, I applaud anything that can be done to reduce smoking.

December 4      Joyce Cushman Livingston

My health has been affected by second-hand smoke, and I have a stack of medical and hospital bills to prove it.

December 4      Polly Eberhardt Boonton

I find it impossible to understand why smoking is allowed anywhere in any health care facility.

December 4      Shirley Feller Cranbury

As a patient in Princeton Hospital, I suffered an asthma attack because of smoke entering my room from the waiting rooms where smoking was allowed.

December 4      Laverne Hanssler, L.P.N. Jonesboro, Arkansas

I left my New Jersey job because of smoke in hospitals.

December 4      Henry J. Hecker and Marianne Hecker Northfield

It is inconceivable that a health institution should even have to consider limiting smoking pollution. If smokers are allowed to contaminate the air of nonsmokers, then a rapist must also have the right to rape anyone to satisfy his needs.

December 4      Alan E. Kligerman Pleasantville

Hospital air should be clean, as are the water and food in hospitals.

December 4      A. V. Kokatnur Belle Mead

It is appalling to think our hospitals aren't smokefree.

December 4      Janice Lango

I have been hurt by smoking as a patient and a visitor.

December 4      Randolph R. Larate and Karen A. Larate  
Scotch Plains

As patients and visitors, we have suffered significant discomfort from smoke. We are also concerned about safety. We have seen numerous visitors smoking in areas where oxygen is in use.

December 4        Joyce Leuchten   Mountain Lakes

My mother suffers from asthma and is frequently hospitalized. It is ironic that when she is being treated, patients, staff and visitors introduce one of the main causes of her illness--tobacco smoke.

December 4        Lynne K. McLewin   Mahwah

To heal, the body needs vitamin C. Cigarette smoke robs the body of 60% of vitamin C.

December 4        F. David McRitchie   Bound Brook

Last year, I made frequent visits to a dying friend who was in several hospitals and nursing homes. I could not tolerate visiting him more than once a week because of the smoke.

December 4        Sherrie Miller   Morristown

I vividly remember the tense days when my 3 year old was in intensive care and I had to wait in a smoke-filled waiting room.

December 4        Stanton M. Pikus   Medford

My wife and I have to put up with unhealthy air when we take our son to the emergency room for treatment of his allergies.

December 4        Stephanie Sarton

Smoke has hurt me as a visitor and hospital staff member.

December 4        James S. Thornton   Princeton

Please do not let the tobacco industry force hospitals to allow smoking. Tobacco is a random killer. No one would for a minute consider giving access to a random killer with a gun.

December 5        Blumenfeld family   Chatham Township

When a person is confined to a hospital they can't leave to breathe smokefree air.

December 5      Leo S. Burnett   Summit

I am indignant about the relentless and immoral tobacco industry.

December 5      Daniel Dankberg   Teaneck

As a patient in Hackensack Hospital I saw many people smoking.  
Try very hard to help!

December 5      Alan Douglas   New York, New York

Non-smoking hospitals will be more pleasant and healthful and the image of the medical industry as a serious health institution will be clear.

December 5      Denise Griffin   Hawthorne

My father recently had outpatient surgery. He and my mother were exposed to much smoke in the waiting area, the same area where mothers and new babies are discharged.

December 5      Lou Hull   West Cape May

When I recently had a mammogram, the waiting area was full of smoke.

December 5      William Lango   North Bergen

A hospital's function should be to cure illness, not promote it.

December 5      Eleanor S. Lukas and Walter E. Lukas  
Rochelle Park

We have seen several instances of patients hurt by smoke. Walter's brother, a heavy smoker, quit smoking during his stay at a smokefree hospital. Our best friend developed severe bronchial asthma from smoking by nurse co-workers. She had no illness or coughing last year after the hospital went smokefree.

December 5      Grace T. Meyer   River Vale

When my daughter had kidney surgery, her room was permeated by smoke from the nearby nurses' lounge.

December 5      Charles Novak and Jeannette Novak  
Upper Saddle River

A nurse friend says her clothes smell of smoke after work. Clothes can be cleaned, lungs can't.

December 5      Leslee Oliu, M.P.H., R.D.    Monmouth Junction

As the Administrative Supervisor of the Rutgers Community Health Plan Department of Health Promotion with 80,000 members, it is difficult to think of a place more inappropriate to permit smoking than a hospital.

December 5      M. K. Salnave    Guttenberg

I work in a nursing home and get sick from the smoke. This summer I could not visit a hospital patient because of the chain-smoker sharing the room.

December 5      Denise M. Walsh

This past year I had an operation (polypdectomy) and the smoke in the hospital worsened my condition.

December 5      Michael Willen, M.D.    Trenton

I am an Oncologist and President of the American Cancer Society, Mercer County Unit. Smokefree hospitals are necessary for treatment of smokers and nonsmokers.

December 6      Maryellen Bohan    Rochelle Park

While visiting my grandparents in the separate hospitals they were in, I was bothered by the smoke from the smoking areas which carried throughout the hospitals.

December 6      Sandy Buleza    Scotch Plains

Any institution dedicated to health should be smokefree.

December 6      Lorraine Earley    Riverton

As a recent hospital patient, I say no one has the right to kill others with smoke.

December 6      Gladys Kaplan    Margate, Florida

I have asthma, and as a patient in the hospital I am outraged by smoke.

December 6 Sallie Sullivan Parsippany

Twice while waiting with sick and injured children for emergency room treatment, my children and I have had to breathe tobacco smoke.

December 6 Susan J. Waldman Randolph

My husband was a patient February. While he was in the hospital, I suffered from smoke.

December 7 Marilyn Bennett Secaucus

Smoking in hospitals is hypocritical, poor education and a fire hazard.

December 7 Bertha Braun Westmont

After I had surgery a patient in the next bed and her visitors smoked which made me extremely ill.

December 7 Penny Happel-Catton, R.N. North Bergen

As a hospital staff member, patient and visitor, I am concerned about the example that is set when hospitals allow smoking. I am also concerned about patient comfort and the possibility of fire.

December 7 Bruce A. Catton North Bergen

identical to above

December 7 Dorothy Melvin Jersey City

identical to above

December 7 Joan Pollock Jersey City

identical to above

December 7 Ella Parker

identical to above

December 7 Evelyn Rodriguez

identical to above

December 7 Evelyn M. Reid

identical to above

December 7 Christa Kral

identical to above

December 7 Gloria Miller, R.N.

identical to above

December 7 Aida Fuentes, R.N.

identical to above

December 7 T. Lin

identical to above

December 7 Carole Rothstein Millington

When my husband suffered a stroke in July, I was unable to use the hospital facility because of smoking.

December 7 Edward F. and Ethel S. Lilien Springfield

During three hospitalizations, recovery was complicated by smoke in the hospitals. The same goes for other patients we know. A friend with respiratory problems could not visit because of the smoke situation.

December 8 Linda Bird, L.P.N. Muscatine, Iowa

As a health professional I think we should set a good example. As a lay person I would appreciate not walking through smoke to visit patients.

December 8 Frances Birnbaum Clifton

I awoke after surgery gasping because of smoking in my room.

This is a terrible thing to inflict on people in a hospital who aren't there for a picnic or a cocktail party.

December 8 Hanan M. Isaacs Princeton Junction

The federal government has eliminated tobacco smoke on airline flights. Hospitals should be smokefree too.

December 8 Gladys Johnson Fanwood

It seems so out of place to allow such an unhealthy habit where people go to be made well.

December 8 Allen L. and Judith S. Mossman Wayne

A hospital where many patients are already in fragile health is no place to allow smoking.

December 8 Lucy Sheffield, O.D. Cherry Hill

Patients are victims of smoke. They are made sick but can't leave; being a patient is not a free choice. I am allergic to smoke.

December 9 Annette T. Bower Linden

While in the hospital this summer and on oxygen, I had difficulty breathing. The doctor's smoke-filled lounge was just a few steps from my room.

December 9 Beatrice Chambers Summit

Hospitals are the place where people go to get well, not to get more sick from smoke.

December 9 Gary Clover Marlton

My father-in-law in intensive care suffered discomfort from smoking in the nurses' break area.

December 10 John Gonchar Union

If smoking is to be allowed in hospitals, then alcohol, guns and ammunition should also be sold in hospitals so that hospitals can ensure their economic prosperity and create problems to treat.

December 10 Patricia Clark Kenschaft, Ph.D. Upper Montclair



I have myasthenia gravis, so my muscles collapse when exposed to nicotine. Hospitals are terrible for me. When my mother was terminally ill, my emotions were compounded by the fact that visits to her involved a constant fear of being totally incapacitated myself. I am always made to feel like a fugitive during hospital visits.

December 10 Virginia L. Schmeal Hackettstown

On a night before surgery, I was moved into the hall because another patient was smoking in my room. It is 18 years later and I want to be assured of a smokefree hospital for any future admissions.

December 11 John F. Banzhaf III Washington, D.C.

I am Executive Director of Action on Smoking and Health (ASH). More than 3,000 ASH supporters in New Jersey want smokefree hospitals for health protection, health education and fire protection.

December 11 D. L. Chester, D.D.S. Union

I hear much praise for hospitals going smokefree.

December 11 James E. Katz, Ph.D. Morristown

When a person is sick, smoke is especially irritating.

December 11 Frances B. and Raymond P. Philhower Morristown

As a hospital patient, Frances suffered more from the smoke permitted in the hospital than the back problem for which she was hospitalized.

December 14 Kathryn S. Meier, M.P.H. Providence, R.I.

Our smokefree hospitals and our schools are strong, viable signs of how we value the health of our residents. It is imperative that New Jersey continues to be a leader.

undated Thomas A. Chamberlain Hillside

Smoke compounds the discomforts of my problems for which I have to be in a hospital.

undated Joyce Fogg, R.N. Fair Lawn

As a patient in hospital, I suffer complications from smoke.

undated Ronald A. Graham New Providence

While recovering from major surgery this spring, my wife and I were unable to use the hospital lounge because of smoke. Hospitals should help people recover, not add to their distress.

undated George A. Grieder Dover

Many of my visits to area hospitals (we are the parents of nine children, eight adopted, all handicapped) have had one big, bad taste -- smoke. Our children and my wife and I have had to suffer many times because of smoke.

undated Elizabeth H. Heritage

It is unthinkable that a health facility should allow smoking.

undated Robert Jackyra Cherry Hill

Smoking is irritating to patients and visitors. Hospitals should signify the utmost in cleanliness.

undated Joseph B. Kruskal Maplewood

My wife, a former smoker, and I fully support smokefree hospitals.

undated Valerie J. Nelson Titusville

When my child had open heart surgery, I couldn't use the smoke-filled waiting areas. My child's room smelled of smoke from the lounges. The only phone she could use to call family members was in the smoking lounge.

undated David Nugent Pennington

I recently had to take my daughter to the Emergency Room at Hamilton Hospital and I was unable to sit in the waiting room because of the smoke. It is inappropriate, if not ludicrous, for a health facility to be an unhealthful place.

undated Vernon E. Peterson Hawthorne

People go to hospitals to be treated for illness and do not appreciate being made sick by someone blowing poisonous gases at them.