

## NJTV News

### **GASP Wants 100 Percent Smoke-Free Environment**

#### **5-29-14 Interview on NJTV News with Karen Blumenfeld, Esq. Executive Director, Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy**

More towns are banning smoking at the beach in New Jersey. Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy (GASP) Executive Director Karen Blumenfeld told *NJTV News* Managing Editor Mike Schneider that GASP really wants a 100 percent smoke-free environment in public places.

Blumenfeld said that the rate that beaches and parks are starting to ban smoking is very quick. She said that over the course of several years, there has been an explosion in policies that are taking off, not only in New Jersey, but across the country. She said smoke can affect people indoors or outside and banning smoking makes for a more family-friendly environment.

People have said that banning smoking from college campuses is going too far. Blumenfeld's response to that was, "The proof is in the pudding. There are communities with county colleges, as well as state universities and private higher educational institutions that have all gone 100 percent smoke free across the country. It is really based on consumer and student demand that people want to have their environments be smoke free on college campuses. It is not something that has been happening by state laws, it has been happening by individual county colleges or universities making their own decisions."

Blumenfeld said that in 2006, the Smoke-Free Air Act passed, making all K through 12 school properties 100 percent smoke free.

Electronic cigarettes, which have become popular recently, are included in the Smokefree Parks Law, according to Blumenfeld.

She said that some county and state colleges and universities include electronic cigarettes in their bans and some don't. She said that electronic cigarettes are trending with youth and there has been a great increase in use of electronic cigarettes.

Blumenfeld said that it is not clear that electronic cigarettes are less dangerous than regular cigarettes. She said that e-cigarettes have some chemicals similar to regular cigarettes, as well as some different ones and there really aren't long-term studies to show the health consequences. She said there are plenty of short-term studies that have been done to show short-term, negative health effects not only on the people who use electronic cigarettes but also on the people who are exposed to the vapors.

Blumenfeld said it would be up to the committee discussing the latest bill to decide if they would want to allow up to 20 percent smoking in public outdoor areas. She said that she is not sure whether that is going to remain in the bill or not. She said that she really wants smoking to be 100 percent banned because that is where the trend is. She said that it has been a long time since there has been a trend of partial bans and there is a reason for that.

“One hundred percent smoke-free environments help kids not start smoking. All people start to smoke basically before they turn age 21. If you can create a 100 percent smoke-free environment for children and youth, that normalizes smoke-free environments,” said Blumenfeld. “When you say to a child or a teen that you can smoke in one area but not in another, that starts condoning the behavior and it is a very negative health behavior.”

Blumenfeld said that the other problem with having a partial ban is that it's very difficult for people who are there to know where they can and can't smoke. She said from an environmental perspective,

there is a huge environmental impact from tobacco waste and that would still be in existence. She said that it is unclear why the bill contains the 20 percent figure, but GASP would like to see 100 percent smoking ban and that is what many towns in New Jersey are doing.

<http://www.njtvonline.org/news/video/gasp-director-gasp-wants-100-percent-smoke-free-environment/>