



March 1, 2009

## **News Release –**

### **GASP Commemorates 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with Gala Honoring Senator Codey and N.J. Smokefree Hospitals**

Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy (GASP) is marking 35 years of advocating in New Jersey for smoke-free air and tobacco-free lives by hosting its First Annual charity gala on April 1<sup>st</sup> at Crestmont Country Club in West Orange. Former New Jersey Governor and current Senate President The Honorable Richard J. Codey (D-Essex) will be saluted for his long standing commitment to improving public health by supporting smokefree and tobacco control initiatives for New Jersey. In addition, there will be special recognition of the 30 New Jersey hospitals with 100% smoke-free campuses.

The GASP mission is to achieve smoke-free air for nonsmokers and tobacco-free lives in New Jersey. "For 35 years, GASP has shown its strong commitment to promoting public health," said Karen Blumenfeld, J.D., Executive Director of GASP. Among the nonprofit's accomplishments are providing technical assistance that led to the New Jersey Smoke-Free Air Act, signed into law by then Gov. Codey in January 2006, and New Jersey's Smoke-free College Residential Housing Law, the first in the nation in 2005. Presently GASP is collaborating with fellow tobacco control advocates to eliminate the exemption that permits smoking on casino gaming floors in Atlantic City.

Fred M. Jacobs, M.D., J.D., president, GASP Board of Trustees and executive vice president, Saint Barnabas Health Care System, commented, "Senator Codey has long been a champion for improving public health in New Jersey. I am personally pleased to recognize his leadership role in making the New Jersey Smoke-Free Air Act law."

"This is a tremendous honor coming from a group that advocates for issues that are paramount to the public health," said Sen. Codey. "Signing the Smoke Free Air Act and raising the tobacco purchasing age to keep cigarettes out of the hands of teenagers were two of the proudest moments in my career as a public servant. I share this honor with GASP who has supported these efforts every step of the way."

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The GASP gala will also salute New Jersey hospitals that have implemented 100% smoke-free campuses, including the most recent adopters, Somerset Medical Center and Atlantic Health's two hospitals and facilities and Saint Barnabas Health Care System's southern New Jersey facilities. "Along with offering smoking cessation programs, implementing a smokefree work environment helps smokers kick the tobacco habit while creating healthier air for all," said Jacobs.

Information about the April 1<sup>st</sup> event can be obtained at [www.njgasp.org](http://www.njgasp.org) or by calling (908) 273-9368. The gala is being sponsored by Pfizer Inc., Saint Barnabas Health Care System, Atlantic Health, and Occupational & Environmental Health Associates.

Founded in 1974 and based in Summit, N.J., Global Advisors on Smokefree Policy is recognized internationally as a leading resource for smoke-free policy initiatives. Its Tobacco Control Policy & Legal Resource Center serves as an integral resource to public health partners, legislators, policy makers, tobacco control advocates, the business community, the public-at-large and the media. GASP conducts research on tobacco control issues, and creates and archives unique and much-needed information on the emerging issues of smoke-free casinos, multi-unit housing, foster homes and college housing, outdoor venues such as playgrounds, parks and beaches and smoke-free cars when children are present.

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