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EMBARGOED UNTIL JULY 5, 2005

Study Shows Nicotine Levels in Lexington Service Workers Drop 56% After Smoke-Free Law

LEXINGTON, Ky. (July 5, 2005) – A new study being released today demonstrates that the health of area restaurant and bar workers has improved dramatically since the enactment last year of Lexington’s Smoke-Free Law.

The study, conducted by the University of Kentucky College of Nursing in collaboration with the UK Prevention Research Center, examined hair nicotine of 106 employees at nearly 50 randomly selected Lexington bars and restaurants.

Hair samples were analyzed four months before the law took effect and then three months after the enactment of the ordinance, which bans smoking in public areas in Lexington. The study found that lower nicotine levels in the hair samples were found even among workers who smoked.

Principal Investigator Ellen Hahn said, “The smoke-free law is protecting the health of Lexington’s service workers. Food service workers are disproportionately affected by secondhand smoke exposure when compared to white collar workers; and Lexington’s law is helping to change that.”

The study also showed that workers were less likely to report colds and sinus infections after the law went into effect (84 percent pre-law; 49 percent at three months; and 50 percent at six months). Further, the study revealed that workers reported their total exposure to secondhand smoke dropped dramatically after the law went into effect.

Co-investigator Wael Al-Delaimy, MD, PhD, of the University of California, San Diego said, “Even workers who smoke showed lower nicotine levels as a result of the

Law, illustrating that smokers and non-smokers alike reap the health benefits of smoke-free laws.”

For more information, and to see the full report visit the website at <http://www.mc.uky.edu/TobaccoPolicy/NewRelease.HTM>

Hahn will be presenting the study at 4:30 pm today to an Urban County Council Committee to review Lexington’s smoke-free ordinance on the fifth floor of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Center. Dr. Al-Delaimy will be on conference call to answer questions about the hair nicotine procedure.

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