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BACKGROUNDER #2

For Immediate Release

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**AIRCRAFT VENTILATION SYSTEMS OFTEN INADEQUATE TO REMOVE CIGARETTE SMOKE;
PASSENGERS AND CREW COMPLAIN**

WASHINGTON, DC -- Airplane passengers and crew members often complain about the accumulation of cigarette smoke in the air. The reason may be that ventilation systems aboard aircraft do not remove smoke as well as those found in public places.

While reliable scientific tests are difficult to perform aboard aircraft, one calculation presented in a 1986 National Research Council report indicates air quality is not acceptable in 80% of airplane flights.

Other studies reported by the NRC include:

- * Records of passenger or flight attendant complaints compiled by the Association of Flight Attendants listed "smoky" as a complaint in 73 of 297 air quality complaints.

- * A Scandinavian Airlines System study of 1,961 cabin attendants found 69% were "bothered to a great extent" by smoky air. In fact, smoke was the number one complaint, more bothersome than turbulence, noise or cold.

In conclusion, the National Research Council believes it is unlikely airlines will be able to devise systems to increase ventilation to acceptable levels for the following reasons:

- * The only source of fresh air for the cabin comes from air passing through the engines. Extracting more air from the engines could result in decreased fuel efficiency, therefore more fuel costs.
- * Physical barriers between smoking and non-smoking sections as well as separate ventilation systems also appear economically unfeasible.
- * Acceptable filter systems that effectively remove gases and particles from tobacco smoke have not yet been developed.

For these reasons, the American Association for Respiratory Care agrees with the recommendations of the National Research Council: a smoking ban on commercial airlines is the best way of preventing exposure to cigarette smoke.