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## HEALTH GROUPS PETITION OSHA TO PROHIBIT SMOKING IN INDOOR WORKPLACES

WASHINGTON, DC, MAY 6, 1987—Two national health groups have petitioned the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to issue an emergency temporary standard to prohibit smoking in indoor workplaces, in order to protect 52 million nonsmoking workers in the 4.8 million indoor workplaces regulated by OSHA.

The petitioners — Public Citizen Health Research Group (HRG), and the American Public Health Association (APHA) — urged OSHA to take immediate action to ban smoking in the workplace, in light of the extensive new evidence on the danger to nonsmokers from "sidestream" smoke. The petition, if adopted by OSHA, will prohibit smoking in any indoor workplace under OSHA's jurisdiction.

In a cover letter, dated May 5, to the Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health, John A. Pendergrass, signed by Dr. Sidney Wolfe of HRG and Dr. William K. McBeath, Executive Director of APHA, the petitioners noted that a previous petition to OSHA requesting such a ban on workplace smoking was denied. "New evidence regarding this issue necessitates a re-evaluation of OSHA's position," the letter stated, noting that "new information clearly documents the carcinogenicity of second-hand smoke, the exposure of workers while on the job, and the extent of the risks for lung cancer and other diseases caused by passive smoking."

The earlier petition was written before much of the research on passive smoking was completed and reviewed by the Surgeon General, experts at the National Academy of Sciences, the Environmental Protection Agency, and others, the letter said.

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NOTE: News conference at: AHA headquarters, 1015 15th St, NW, Conference Room 2, Washington, DC. The time: 11:00am, Wednesday, May 6. Copies of the petition and cover letter distributed at the news conference.

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standards, action programs, and public policy for good health. of approximately 50,000 health professionals interested in promoting high scientific society whose membership, including its state and local affiliates, is comprised The American Public Health Association, founded in 1872, is a non-governmental

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protection -- the Occupational Safety and Health Act. is so dangerous that we must take upon the most rapid method of bringing them What has changed is that new evidence documents that passive smoking by nonsmokers workplace smoking was a divergent factor from real health and safety issues. produced in the workplace," he said. "We need to believe that the focus on must not be confused with the hazards of toxic and carcinogenic agents that are "The AHA has long held the view that the problem of smoking and its hazards diversion," he said.

that view that most occupational disease is due to cigarettes. This is a shameful He warned, however, that "many employers will take our statement to represent preventing the hazards from passive smoking in the workplace."

thoughtful and timely document that would establish a regulatory framework for Dr. Robbins called the petition, which was developed by his state, "a very

of NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health).

AHA spokesman Dr. Anthony Robbins, a past president of AHA and former director news conference in Washington, DC featuring NIOSH spokesman Dr. Sidney Wolfe, and The new petition was unveiled today by the two health advocacy groups at a