

Predictors of Public Support for Smoke-Free Multi-Unit Housing

Robert McMillen^{1,2}, Jonathan Winickoff^{1,4}, Karen Wilson^{1,3}, Mark Gottlieb^{1,5}, & Jonathan Klein¹

¹American Academy of Pediatrics' Julius B. Richmond Center of Excellence, ²Social Science Research Center, Mississippi State University, ³University of Rochester, ⁴MGH Center for Child and Adolescent Health Policy, MassGeneral Hospital for Children, ⁵Public Health Advocacy Institute, Northeastern University

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: According to the US Census, 26% of homes are in multi-unit housing. Policies that reduce tobacco smoke exposure in multi-unit housing could improve the health of a substantial number of children.

OBJECTIVE: To describe public support for this emerging issue in children's environmental health, and to determine if attitudes and practices about tobacco smoke are associated with support for multi-unit smoke-free policies.

DESIGN/METHODS: Mixed-mode cross-sectional surveys representing national probability samples of adults were administered in 2010. The design included a Random-Digit-Dialing (RDD) frame and an internet panel (IP) frame. Bivariate analyses examined predictors of support, while multivariate analyses controlled for demographics.

RESULTS: The RDD frame yielded a cooperation rate of 71% and a response rate of 47.9% (N=1,504). For the IP frame, 2,272 panelists were randomly drawn from the probability panel; 1,736 responded to the invitation, yielding a final stage completion rate of 67.5% percent. The recruitment rate for this study was 16.4% and the profile rate (at least one member of a recruited household completed a profile survey for the panel) was 65.1%, for a cumulative response rate of 7.2%. Combined results reveal 49.4% believe that smoking should not be allowed inside of multi-unit housing and 37.2% believe that smoking should not be allowed on outdoor areas that are near multiunit housing. Support for smoke-free policies in indoor and outdoor areas of multi-unit housing was higher among: people who prohibited smoking inside (57.9% for indoor areas, 45.3% for outdoor areas) compared to those who did not (28.8% & 16.9%); people who did not believe it was acceptable to smoke in the home even if children were not present at the time (55.8% & 41.9%) compared to those who did (26.1% & 20.2%); those who believed that a person who smokes inside of their apartment or condominium puts the residents of the other units at risk (65.9% & 50.6%) compared to those who did not (20.1% & 12.7%), and nonsmokers (55.8% & 44.3%) compared to smokers (22.4% & 7.8%), (p<.05 for each). These differences persisted after controlling for demographics in multivariate analyses.

CONCLUSIONS: Support was strongest among adults who did not allow smoking inside of their home and who held stronger views about the importance of protecting others from exposure. Although smokers were less supportive, a significant minority of smokers believed that indoor areas of multi-unit housing should be smoke-free. These data have implications for implementing smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing. Public health strategies that increased awareness about the harms of tobacco smoke could increase public support further, and thereby increase the likelihood of landlords and condominium associations implementing smoke-free policies for indoor and outdoor areas.

DETAILED METHODS

SOCIAL CLIMATE SURVEY OF TOBACCO CONTROL: The Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control (SCS-TC) is an annual cross-sectional survey designed to operationalize the concept of social climate into a comprehensive set of quantifiable social and environmental indicators across the social institutions that characterize society.

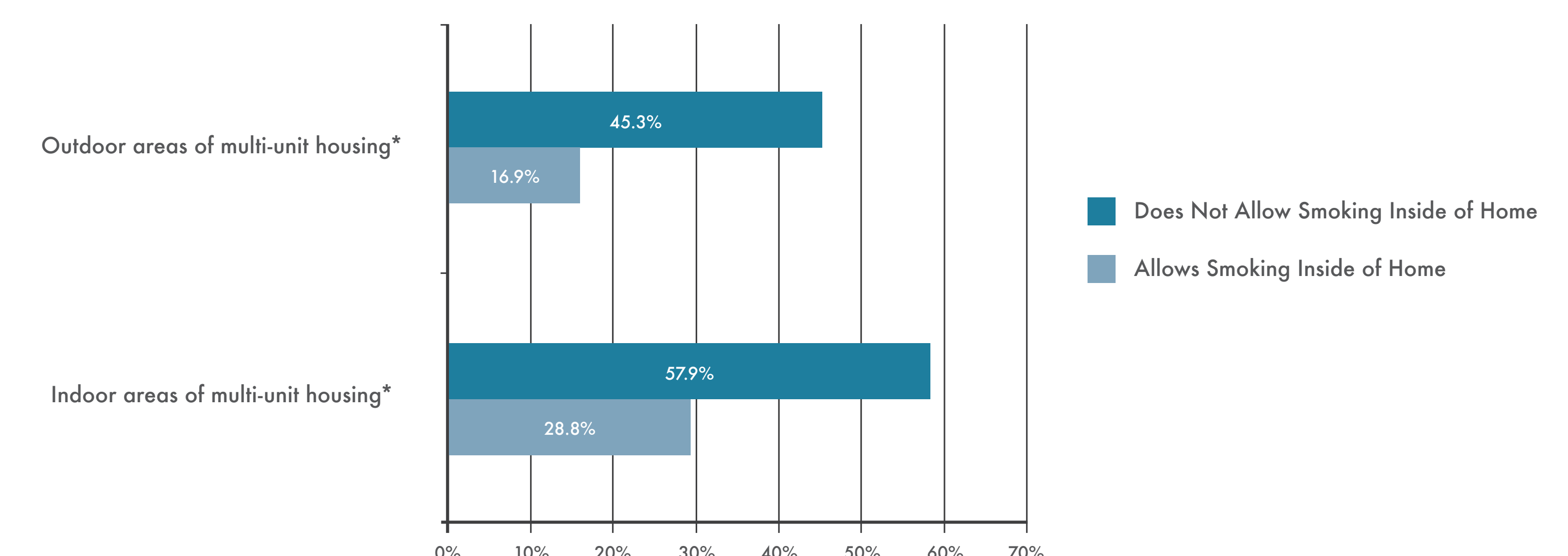
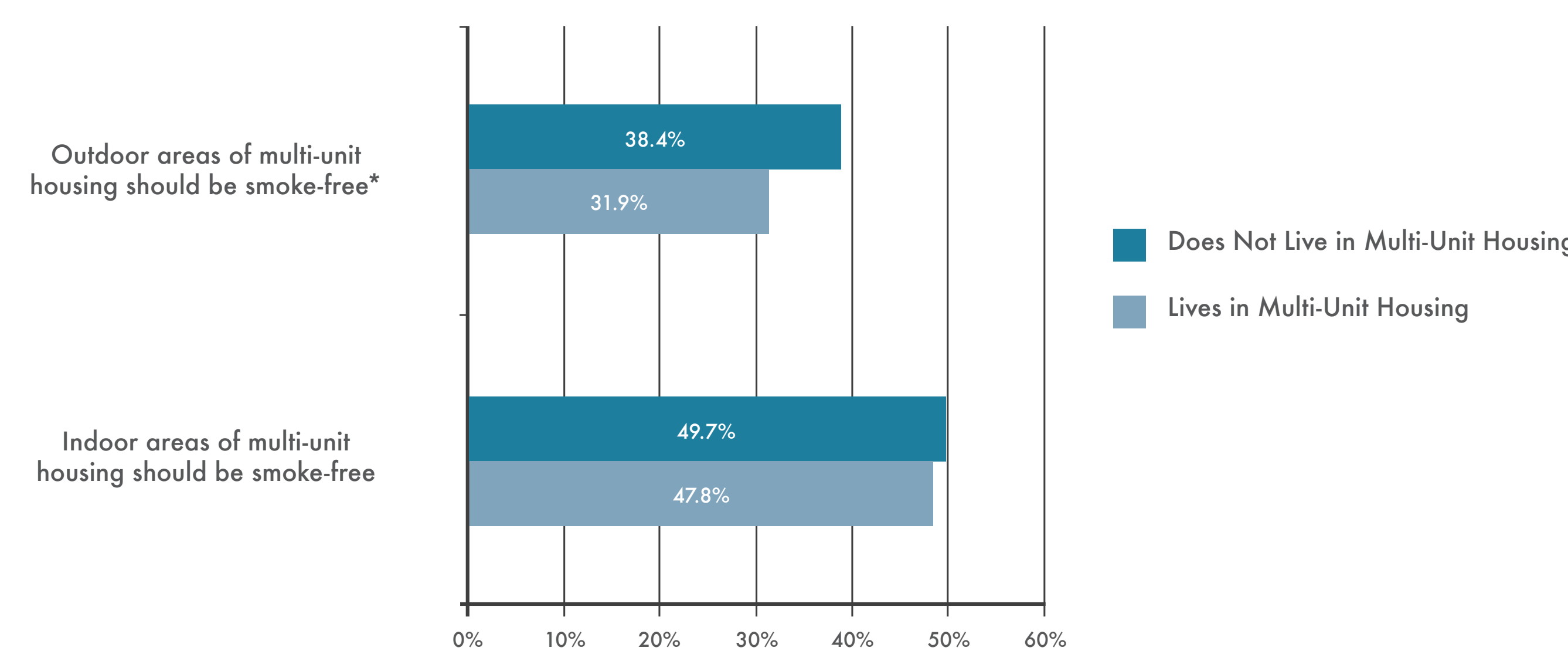
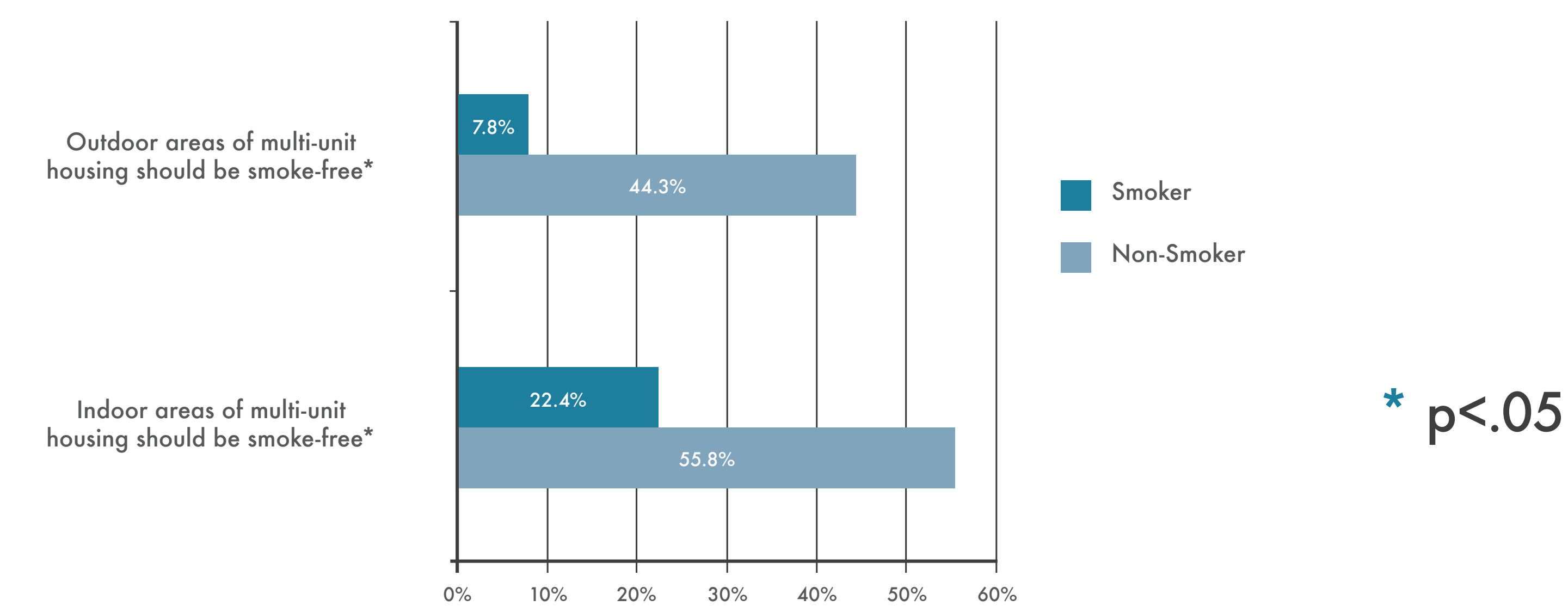
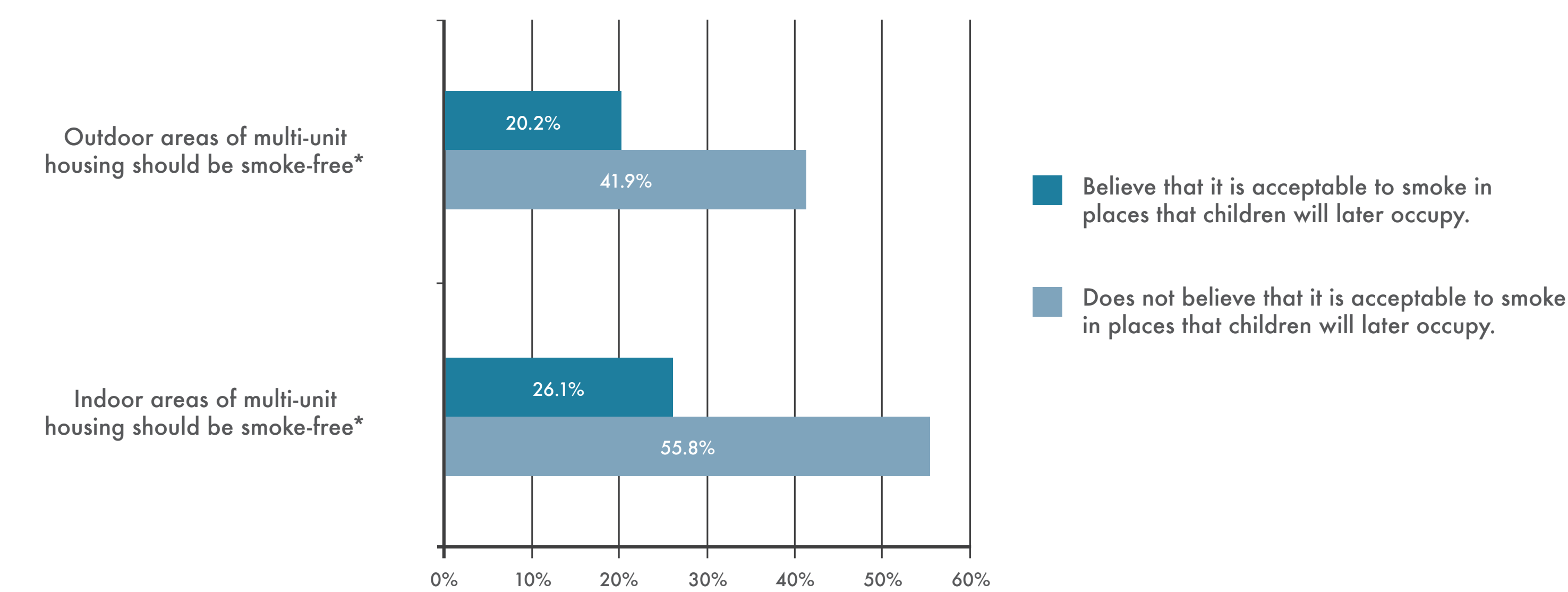
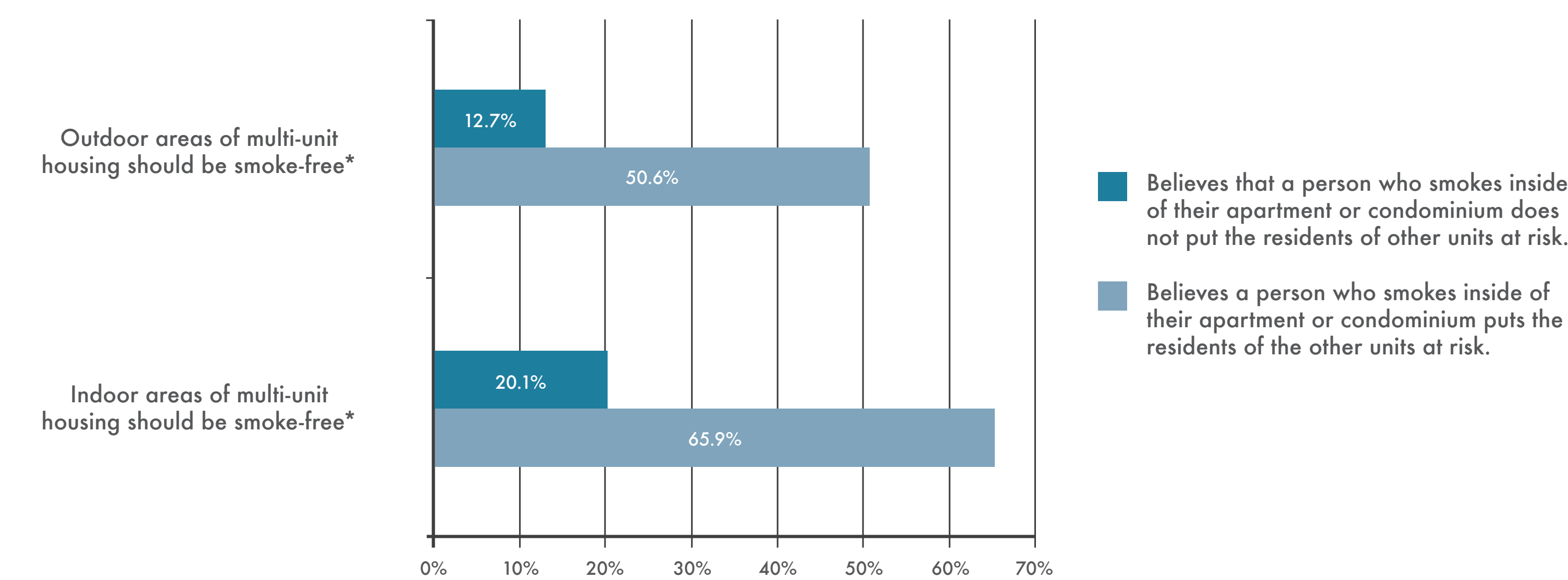
RESPONDENTS: The SCS-TC was administered to a representative sample of U.S. adults in September-November. In order to reduce noncoverage issues arising from wireless substitution, mixed-mode cross-sectional surveys representing national probability samples of adults were administered in 2010. The design included an RDD frame and an internet panel frame developed from a probability sample. Both samples were weighted by age, race, and gender within each census region, based on current U.S. Census estimates.

MEASURES: Two items assessed support for smoke-free multi-unit housing. Two questions from the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) were used to assess current smoking status. Respondents were asked, "Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your entire life?" And if yes, were then asked, "Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all?" Respondents who reported that they smoke every day or some days were categorized as current smokers. Respondents who reported that they did not smoke at all (but who had smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime) were categorized as former smokers.

RESULTS | 2010 WEIGHTED SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

DEMOGRAPHICS	STATISTICS (%)	DEMOGRAPHICS	STATISTICS (%)		
GENDER	MALE	45.9	EDUCATION	NOT A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	31.3
	FEMALE	54.1	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	68.7	
AGE	18-24	11.1	SOME COLLEGE		
	25-44	36.5	COLLEGE DEGREE	35.9	
	45-64	34.6	RURAL/URBAN STATUS	RURAL	
	65 AND OLDER	17.8	URBAN	88.6	
RACE	WHITE	84.4	REGION	NORTHWEST	17.4
	AFRICAN-AMERICAN	11.3	MIDWEST	20.9	
	OTHER	4.3	SOUTH	40.3	
SMOKING STATUS	NEVER SMOKER	55.5	WEST	21.4	
	FORMER SMOKER	27.1			
	CURRENT SMOKER	17.4			

PUBLIC SUPPORT



DISCUSSION

- Support was strongest among adults who did not allow smoking inside of their home and who held stronger views about the importance of protecting others from exposure.
- Although smokers were less supportive, a significant minority of smokers believed that indoor areas of multi-unit housing should be smoke-free.
- These data have implications for implementing smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing.
- Public health strategies that increased awareness about the harms of tobacco smoke could increase public support further, and thereby increase the likelihood of landlords and condominium associations or legislation implementing smoke-free policies for indoor and outdoor areas.