Free Section 8 Public Housing

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ABSTRACT

Background: Section 8 public housing vouchers are administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide subsidies for low-income residents. HUD encourages local public housing agencies to implement smokefree policies, but has proposed elimination of smoking in public housing which excludes Section 8 housing. This study examines U.S. adults' support for smokefree housing policy options.

Methods: Using a nationally representative survey in 2015, we explained Section 8 subsidies and asked respondents to agree or disagree with: 1) Smoking should not be allowed anywhere inside buildings that have Section 8 housing units, and 2) If a building has some units with Section 8 subsidies, smoking should not be allowed in the housing units with subsidies but should be allowed in those that are not subsidized. Chi-square analyses compared support across demographics groups, multiunit housing (MUH) residency and housing subsidy

Results: 3,070 adults completed the survey. The majority (71%) supported prohibiting indoor smoking everywhere inside buildings that have Section 8 housing units, with similar support among adults in MUH (71%) and in detached housing (70%). Adults who receive housing subsidies were marginally less supportive (65%) than those who do not (71%) (p=.09). Overall, adults were less supportive of a Section 8 policy to prohibit smoking only inside of units with subsidies, but allow smoking in non-subsidized units. Only 38% supporting such partial smoking bans, with MUH residents (33%) less supportive than non-MUH residents (40%) (p=.001).

Conclusions: Most U.S. adults support prohibiting smoking in all units in MUH buildings with any Section 8 subsidies. This policy preference has implications for protecting the health of the 4.9 million tenants who receive subsidies and their neighbors.

BACKGROUND

- Tobacco smoke exposure is a significant source of morbidity within the pediatric population.
- Many US residents live in publicly subsidized multiunit housing; few have smoking restrictions.
- Section 8 public housing vouchers are administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide subsidies for low-income residents.
- HUD encourages local public housing agencies to implement smokefree policies, but has proposed elimination of smoking in public housing which excludes Section 8 housing.
- This study examines U.S. adults' support for smokefree housing policy options.

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METHODS

- Data are from the 2015 Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control, a cross-sectional dual-frame survey administered to national probability samples of U.S. adults.
- The design included a Random Digit Dialing (RDD) frame and an internet panel frame developed from a probability sample of U.S. adults, in order to reduce non-coverage issues arising from wireless substitution.
- Data were weighted to adjust for age, race, sex, and region.
- We explained Section 8 subsidies and asked respondents to agree or disagree with:
- o Smoking should not be allowed anywhere inside buildings that have Section 8 housing units, and o If a building has some units with Section 8 subsidies, smoking should not be allowed in the housing units with subsidies but should be allowed in those that are not subsidized.
- Chi-square analyses compared support across demographics groups, multiunit housing (MUH) residency and housing subsidy status.

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TABLE 1. WEIGHTED SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

	2016 Unweighted N = 3,070
Smoking Status	
Never Smokers	60.7%
Former Smokers Current Smokers	26.1% 13.2%
	13.2/0
Region Northeast	18.1%
Midwest	21.4%
South	37.0%
West	23.5%
Race	
White	65.0%
Black	11.8%
Other	23.3%
Age	10 10/
18-24 25-44	13.1% 34.0%
45-64	35.5%
65+	17.4%
Sex	
Males	48.3%
Females	51.7%
Education	
Less than HS	7.4%
High School	19.7%
Some College	29.0% 44.0%
College Degree	44.0%
Housing Lives in Multiunit Housing	26.3%
Lives in Detached Housing	73.7%
Subsidized Housing	7 3 17 7 3
Yes	3.6%
No	96.4%

INSIDE BUILDINGS THAT HAVE SECTION 8 HOUSING UNITS.

	Support	p
Overall	70.8%	
Housing Lives in Multiunit Housing Lives in Detached Housing	70.4%	ns
Subsidized Housing Yes No	64.5% 71.1%	p=.088
Smoking Status Never Smokers Former Smokers Current Smokers	75.6% 69.9% 50.8%	p<.001
Region Northeast Midwest South West	70.6% 69.7% 71.3% 70.9%	ns
Race White Black Other	69.7% 61.9% 78.4%	p<.001
Age 18-24 25-44 45-64 65+	74.4% 72.4% 65.5% 75.3%	p<.001
Sex Males Females	68.1% 73.3%	p=.002
Education Less than HS High School Some College College Degree	61.6% 72.6% 71.6% 71.2%	p=.015

TABLE 2. SUPPORT FOR PROHIBITING TABLE 3. SUPPORT FOR A SECTION 8 INDOOR SMOKING EVERYWHERE POLICY TO PROHIBIT SMOKING ONLY INSIDE OF UNITS WITH SUBSIDIES, BUT ALLOW SMOKING IN NON-SUBSIDIZED UNITS.

	Support	p
Overall	38.2%	
Housing		
Lives in Multiunit Housing	33.3%	
Lives in Detached Housing	40.0%	p=.001
Subsidized Housing		
Yes	37.4%	
No	38.4%	ns
Smoking Status		
Never Smokers	40.2%	
Former Smokers	36.2%	
Current Smokers	34.5%	p=.041
Region		
Northeast	31.0%	
Midwest	39.7%	
South	40.6%	000
West	38.5%	p=.002
Race	2/ 00/	
White Black	36.0% 36.2%	
Other	45.6%	p<.001
Age	45.076	p<.001
18-24	48.8%	
25-44	41.1%	
45-64	31.9%	
65+	36.9%	p<.001
Sex		
Males	42.5%	
Females	34.2%	p<.001
Education		
Less than HS	37.8%	
High School	42.4%	
Some College	37.1%	
College Degree	37.2%	ns

{CONCLUSIONS}

- Most U.S. adults support prohibiting smoking in all units in MUH buildings with any Section 8 subsidies. o Adults who would be impacted by a smoke-free rule, those who live in MUH buildings, are less supportive of a policy that would not apply to all units in buildings with Section 8 subsidies.
- This policy preference has implications for protecting the health of the 4.9 million tenants who receive subsidies and their neighbors.
- Smoke-free housing should be available to all.

RESULTS

- 3,070 adults completed the survey. Weighted sample characteristics are presented in Table 1.
- The majority (71%) supported prohibiting indoor smoking everywhere inside buildings that have Section 8 housing units, with similar support among adults in MUH (71%) and in detached housing (70%).
- o Adults who receive housing subsidies were marginally less supportive (65%) than those who do not (71%) (p=.09). Support also varied by smoking status, race, age, sex, and education (see Table 2).
- Overall, adults were less supportive of a Section 8 policy to prohibit smoking only inside of units with subsidies, but allow smoking in non-subsidized units.
- Only 38% supporting such partial smoking bans, with MUH residents (33%) less supportive than non-MUH residents (40%) (p=.001).
- o Support also varied by smoking status race, age, sex, and education. There were no differences between adults who receive housing subsidies and those who do not.

{LIMITATIONS}

- Self-report data
- Internet panel survey may also have bias