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Poll finds support for smoking curbs

FROM STAFF REPORTS

More than two-thirds of North Carolina adults favor a statewide ban on smoking in public enclosed areas, such as restaurants, stadiums and shopping centers, according to a poll by researchers at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Of adults surveyed, 67.6 percent support the ban, according to results released Thursday by the Tobacco Prevention and Evaluation Program at UNC-CH. Also, 90 percent would support a law requiring all schools to be 100 percent tobacco free, the poll found.

A bill that would have required most restaurants in North Caro-

lina to become smoke-free was narrowly defeated last month in the state House.

The state Senate passed a separate bill in April that would require all school districts that have not yet adopted a 100 percent tobacco-free policy to do so. The House is expected to vote on similar legislation this month.

Three-fourths of the state's school districts — 86 of 115 — have adopted tobacco-free policies that ban smoking on school property or at school-sponsored events.

The Tobacco Prevention and Evaluation Program and the UNC Survey Research Unit con-

ducted telephone surveys with a random statewide sample of 251 North Carolina adults and a random sample of 277 adults in Johnston County. The results of the two surveys were weighted to be representative of North Carolina adults.

The researchers said interest in smoking bans has risen nationally and in the state since the U.S. surgeon general declared in 2006 that secondhand tobacco smoke causes thousands of premature deaths each year and other serious health problems.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Substance Abuse

Policy Research Program funded the surveys.

Among the findings:

- Of nonsmokers, 94 percent support tobacco-free policies in all schools. Among smokers, support was 78.4 percent.

- In Johnston County, the state's No. 1 tobacco-producing county, 79 percent support tobacco-free policies in schools.

- Among nonsmokers, 81.5 percent support a statewide ban on smoking in public enclosed areas.

- In Johnston County, 60 percent of adults favor a statewide ban on smoking in public enclosed areas.