

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Lesbian Community Cancer Project Awarded Grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to Reduce Tobacco Use Among the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community By Focusing on Promotion and Compliance with Chicago's Clean Indoor Air Ordinance**

**Chicago, January 23, 2006** – The Lesbian Community Cancer Project (LCCP) announced today that it received a \$50,000 grant to build support for comprehensive clean indoor air policies among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) leaders. This initiative is one of 17 projects supported by *Tobacco Policy Change: A Collaboration for Healthier Communities and States*, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

“This funding will help us educate the LGBT community about the disproportionate impact tobacco has on our community and how clean indoor air in workplaces is a positive step forward for the public’s health,” state Jessica Halem, Executive Director of the Lesbian Community Cancer Project.

Michelle Fire, owner of Big Chicks and Tweet, chose to go smoke-free on January 16. This makes Big Chicks the first veteran LGBT bar and third LGBT bar (Minibar and Marty’s both recently opened) to offer the Chicago LGBT community a smoke-free bar. Michelle Fire said, “Going smoke-free early was the right thing to do for both the health of my staff and our patrons. After 7 days, business is robust and the mood is a happy one!”

When asked in a recent survey by Witeck-Combs Communications and Harris Interactive® whether or not they would prefer smoke-free bars and clubs, 59 percent of adults nationwide, including those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT), said they preferred a smoke-free environment. According the survey results, when asked if they would be willing to pay an additional cover charge for their favorite bar or club to be smoke-free, 70 percent of GLBT respondents who indicated that they prefer smoke-free bars and clubs said they would be willing to pay more for that environment. In contrast, only 52 percent of heterosexual respondents who indicated the same preference said they would be willing to pay an additional cover charge.

“It is vital that people who live and work in places hit hardest by tobacco-caused diseases have a say in making their communities healthier places to work and raise a family,” said Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A., RWJF president and CEO. “The work of the Lesbian Community Cancer Project reflects a focused, community-based approach targeted in areas that suffer disproportionately high rates of tobacco use, exposure to secondhand smoke and related diseases.”

Today's announcement marks the second round of three one-year grant awards, which vary in range from \$50,000 to \$150,000. Including today's grant announcements, *Tobacco Policy Change: A Collaborative for Healthier Communities and States* is providing up to \$12 million in support of tobacco prevention and cessation policy initiatives, especially in those areas where tobacco continues to have its most devastating consequences.

For more information on this program and others supported by RWJF, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org).

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The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to improving the health and health care of all Americans, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, meaningful and timely change. For more than 30 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime.

The mission of the Lesbian Community Cancer Project is to advance the health and quality of life for lesbians, bisexuals and those who are transgender through advocacy and public education.

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