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Madison, WI. On August 1, 2015, Ho-Chunk Gaming took a bold step in their Madison casino: they made the entire casino smoke-free.

Executive Manager Daniel Brown was encouraged after reading *Gambling with our Health*, a study conducted by the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council's Epidemiology Center (GLITEC). GLITEC partnered with the Lake of the Torches Casino in Lac du Flambeau to survey their player's club members about attitudes toward cigarette smoke. The results indicated that going smoke-free could bring high-tier players in more often, with a positive effect for most patrons.

Ho-Chunk Gaming decided to give it a try. At first, the Madison casino saw their slot win and their net income fall but it's hard to say how much of that was due to the smoking policy. At the time the smoke-free policy went into effect, Ho-Chunk Gaming restructured their loyalty program to require guests to play more to win incentives.

By July 2016, casino revenue had returned to pre-smoke-free levels, with steady gains after that. In March 2017, Ho-Chunk Gaming Madison saw their highest numbers on record, with slot wins exceeding their previous high month by 8.29%.

Meanwhile, they tracked patron comments on the environmental changes. In the first four months, they received 59 comments from people who wanted them to bring back smoking, but more—99—said they loved the smoke-free gaming. By the end of the first year of being smoke free, positive comments outnumbered negative comments nearly three to one.

During this time, "Wins Per Guest" steadily increased, meaning people were staying and playing longer—perhaps because they're more comfortable in the smoke-free environment. Staff at the casino are also happy with the change. They're no longer bringing the smell of cigarette smoke home with them in their hair and clothes at the end of each shift. Even those employees who smoke appreciate having cleaner air to breathe during their workdays.

The health benefits of going smoke-free indoors are well established. Data on the health consequences and public costs of secondhand smoke led to the 2010 Wisconsin law banning smoking in workplaces. Because of sovereignty, Indian-owned gaming facilities have been able to keep letting smokers light up—a situation many have regarded as essential to the success of the casinos. Their employees have borne the cost—including greater risk for heart attacks, lung cancer, and other respiratory illnesses.

Mr. Brown is optimistic about the future of the smoke-free facility. Other casino managers may be compelled to consider Ho-Chunk Gaming's experience. Those who love gambling, but don't want to gamble with their health, will be looking forward to a smoke-free casino near them.

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