

Arizona



Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth People, Promoting Comprehensive Tobacco Control

Public Health Problem

Smoking among teenagers is a major public health problem in Arizona, where 26.6% of people are aged 18 years or younger and an estimated 21.5% of adults smoke. If current tobacco-use patterns persist in Arizona, one-third of tobacco-using teenagers aged 18 years or younger will die prematurely of a smoking-related disease during adulthood.

Program Example

Arizona's Tobacco Education and Prevention Program (TEPP) is a comprehensive program, launched in 1996, to prevent and reduce tobacco use. Arizona uses 23% of revenues from the state's cigarette excise tax to fund TEPP. TEPP currently funds 15 county and 10 tribal community-based projects as well as the Intertribal Council of Arizona. TEPP also funds statewide programs including the American Cancer Society Worksite Outreach Program, the University of Arizona Healthcare Partnership, the Arizona Interscholastic Association, the Attorney General Compliance Check Program, and a statewide campaign to reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke. In addition, TEPP administers the statewide tobacco use cessation helpline for both English and Spanish speakers. TEPP also has worked with the Coalition for Tobacco-Free Arizona Policy Education Subcommittee and the Arizona Department of Education to develop a checklist to assess schools' progress toward adhering to the new tobacco-free schools guidelines and to help schools adopt and enforce their own policies.

Implications and Impact

Arizona's Tobacco Education and Prevention Program has been highly successful and recognized as one of the best in the nation. Because almost all smokers begin smoking during their teenage years, preventing tobacco use among young people is critical to the overall goal of reducing the prevalence of smoking. In 2002, the excise tax was increased by 60 cents a pack to \$1.18 a pack. Programs like these play pivotal roles in reducing and eliminating tobacco use among state residents.

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