

# Massachusetts



## Changing Community Norms, Promoting Comprehensive Tobacco Control

### Public Health Problem

More than 6 million people live in Massachusetts, and nearly 1 of every 4 are aged 18 years or younger. An estimated 19% of adults in Massachusetts smoke cigarettes. If current tobacco-use patterns persist, one-third of tobacco users aged 18 years or younger will die prematurely of a smoking-related disease when they reach adulthood.

### Program Example

The Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program has developed and established Targeted Community Smoking Intervention Programs, which use innovative strategies to involve groups at high risk for tobacco use in changing community norms that support tobacco use. The program also works with health care providers to ensure delivery of smoking cessation services. In addition, the program has developed a quit line that allows people to request smoking cessation information that can be automatically faxed to them.

### Implications and Impact

The percentage of Massachusetts adults who smoke cigarettes declined from nearly 23% in 1991 to 19% in 2002, according to the state's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Nearly 35% of high school students smoked cigarettes in 1997, but this percentage declined to an estimated 26% of high school students in 2001, according to the state's Youth Risk Behavior Survey. In 2001, the state cigarette excise tax increased from 76 cents per pack to \$1.51 per pack. Since Massachusetts launched the Targeted Community Smoking Intervention Programs, tobacco product sales and tobacco use in Massachusetts have declined dramatically. Total per capita cigarette purchases in Massachusetts fell 30% between 1992 and 1998. These accomplishments are examples of how a tobacco control program, when supported by adequate resources and sustained over time, can have substantial public health accomplishments.