



New York

Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People, Reducing and Eliminating Tobacco Use Across the State

Public Health Problem

More than 18 million people live in New York, and 22.4% of them are aged 18 years or younger. An estimated 22.4% of adults in New York 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 during adulthood.

Program Example

The New York State Tobacco Control Program has provided extensive public education around the state's recently expanded smoke-free workplace law, including presentations to community and business groups across the state. The program released a tool kit containing resources and information on how to build public support for the law and reach out to businesses and employers to provide resources and information to effectively transition to a smoke-free environment. An extensive plan has been developed to evaluate the health and economic impact of this landmark law. Youth groups in New York have joined national efforts to raise awareness among both young people and adults about the prevalence and promotion of smoking in movies. This plan, referred to as the Hollywood Initiative, encourages young people across the state to take action to reduce the normalization of smoking by the movie industry. In addition, the New York State Smokers Quitline partnered with the New York City Department of Health to promote cessation services to smokers.

Implications and Impact

New York City became the first community in the nation to meet the *Healthy People 2010* objective of increasing the cigarette excise tax to \$2 per pack. As a result, the combined federal, state, and local taxes total \$3.39 on each pack of cigarettes. Moreover, the state's cigarette excise tax is one of the highest in the country. These efforts are making a difference, as reflected in declining rates of cigarette smoking among high school students. Nearly 33% of high school students smoked cigarettes in 1997, but this percentage declined to 26.8% by 2000, according to the New York State Youth Tobacco Survey. Because most cigarette 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. Programs like the New York State Tobacco Control Program play pivotal roles in reducing and eliminating tobacco use among state residents.