

Vermont



Controlling Tobacco Use Among Young People Through Peer Outreach, Media Campaigns, Laws, and Policies

Public Health Problem

More than 600,000 people live in Vermont, and nearly a fourth of them are aged 18 years or younger. An estimated 21.2% of Vermont adults 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 Vermont Department of Health's Tobacco Control Program supports Vermont Kids Against Tobacco, which reaches out to young people in schools and other sites statewide to form groups of young people devoted to keeping themselves and their peers tobacco free. The tobacco control program also sponsors media campaign programs targeting young people, including an ongoing prevention campaign targeting young people aged 10–13 years and a social norms campaign that aims to correct misconceptions about the prevalence of cigarette smoking among young people. In addition, the Vermont legislature has passed laws and policies to help reduce tobacco use by restricting smoking in the workplace, prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to people under the age of 18, and banning smoking in the common areas of all enclosed indoor places with public access, including restaurants.

Implications and Impact

Within the past decade, rates of cigarette smoking have declined significantly among Vermont's young people: 23.7% of high school students smoked cigarettes in 2001 versus 38.3% in 1997, according to data from the state's Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Vermont's state cigarette excise tax also increased from 38 cents per pack to \$1.19 per pack in 2002. The continued success of Vermont's tobacco control efforts will require programs and policies that address the needs of state residents of all ages and all racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds. The program staff at the Vermont Department of Health will conduct special outreach training on tobacco control and prevention for members of low-income and minority groups.

Contact Information

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