

Preventing Tobacco Use and Exposure

WHY IS TOBACCO USE A THREAT TO OUR NATION'S HEALTH?

Major Cause of Sickness and Death:

- Worldwide, tobacco use causes nearly five million deaths per year.²
- Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. Every year, smoking and secondhand smoke kill approximately 440,000 people by causing lung cancer, emphysema, heart disease, and other illnesses.³
- Exposure to secondhand smoke is responsible for approximately 38,000 of these deaths each year.⁴
- Nearly 21 percent of U.S. adults still smoke, as do 19.5 percent of high school students.⁵ While significant reductions were achieved in the late 1990's and early 2000's, progress has stalled in recent years.

Health Consequences:

- Smoking harms almost every organ of the body; causing many diseases and reducing the health of smokers in general.⁶
- More than 80 percent of lung cancer deaths and about 20 percent of all cancer deaths are caused by tobacco.⁷
- Smoking causes coronary heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States.⁹
- Smoking triples the risk of dying from heart disease among middle-aged men and women.¹⁰
- Cigarette smoking causes 80-90 percent of deaths from chronic obstructive lung disease.¹¹

High Costs:

- Tobacco use costs the U.S. almost \$100 billion annually in health care bills, imposing a hidden tax on every individual, family, and business. Productivity losses from premature death total another \$97 billion.¹²
- People exposed to secondhand smoke run up an average \$10 billion annually in health care costs.¹³



Alarming Trends:

- Every day in America, 4,000 kids try their first cigarette. Another 1,000 kids become daily smokers and one-third of them will die prematurely as a result.¹⁴
- Progress in reducing smoking has stalled among both youths and adults. In 2008, 20.6 percent of adults smoked cigarettes, about the same as the 20.9 percent in 2004 and 2005. Among high school students, smoking levels have remained around 20 percent for many years.
- Tobacco company marketing expenditures have skyrocketed since the 1998 state tobacco settlement. From 1998 to 2005, tobacco marketing expenditures nearly doubled from \$6.9 billion to \$13.4 billion.¹⁶
- Most states fail to fund tobacco prevention programs at levels recommended by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In Fiscal Year 2008, states spent less than three percent of the \$24.9 billion available to them on tobacco prevention and cessation programs. Investing only 15 percent of the available funds would allow every state tobacco control program to be funded at the level recommended by CDC.¹⁷
- Approximately 31.5 percent of adults who live below the poverty level smoke, compared to 19.6 percent who live at or above poverty level.¹⁸

“WE KNOW HOW TO WIN THE FIGHT AGAINST TOBACCO -- THE NATION'S NUMBER ONE CAUSE OF PREVENTABLE DEATH -- BUT OUR ULTIMATE SUCCESS DEPENDS ON RESISTING COMPLACENCY AND MORE AGGRESSIVELY IMPLEMENTING PROVEN STRATEGIES. THESE INCLUDE WELL-FUNDED TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CESSATION PROGRAMS, HIGHER TOBACCO TAXES, SMOKE-FREE AIR LAWS, AND EFFECTIVE REGULATION OF TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND MARKETING.”¹

-- Matthew L. Myers,
President, Campaign
for Tobacco-Free Kids

SEPTEMBER 2010

PREVENTING
EPIDEMICS.
PROTECTING
PEOPLE.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO STAMP OUT SMOKING?

- **Support Full Implementation of the Regulation of Tobacco Products.** Congress and the President should ensure full implementation of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (P.L. 111-31) which granted the U.S. Food and Drug Administration the authority to regulate the manufacturing, marketing and sale of tobacco products.
- **Expand Proven Tobacco Control Measures.** State and local leaders should implement proven measures to reduce tobacco use and protect everyone from the harms of second-hand smoke. These include tobacco taxes, comprehensive laws to make all workplaces and public places smoke-free, full funding of tobacco

prevention and cessation programs, and access to proven smoking cessation methods.

- **Reduce Global Tobacco Use and Exposure.** Countries should ratify and implement the new international tobacco control treaty, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, to reduce tobacco use and save lives.
- **Fund Tobacco Prevention Initiatives.** Congress and the President should increase federal funding for tobacco prevention efforts through CDC, and work to ensure the implementation of provisions under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), including using resources from the Prevention and Public Health Fund.

ENDNOTES

- 1 "CDC Survey Shows Youth Smoking Continues to Decline Slowly, But More Must Be Done to Accelerate Progress." Press Release from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. July 8, 2010. <http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/Script/DisplayPressRelease.php3?Display=1222>. (accessed July 29, 2010).
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