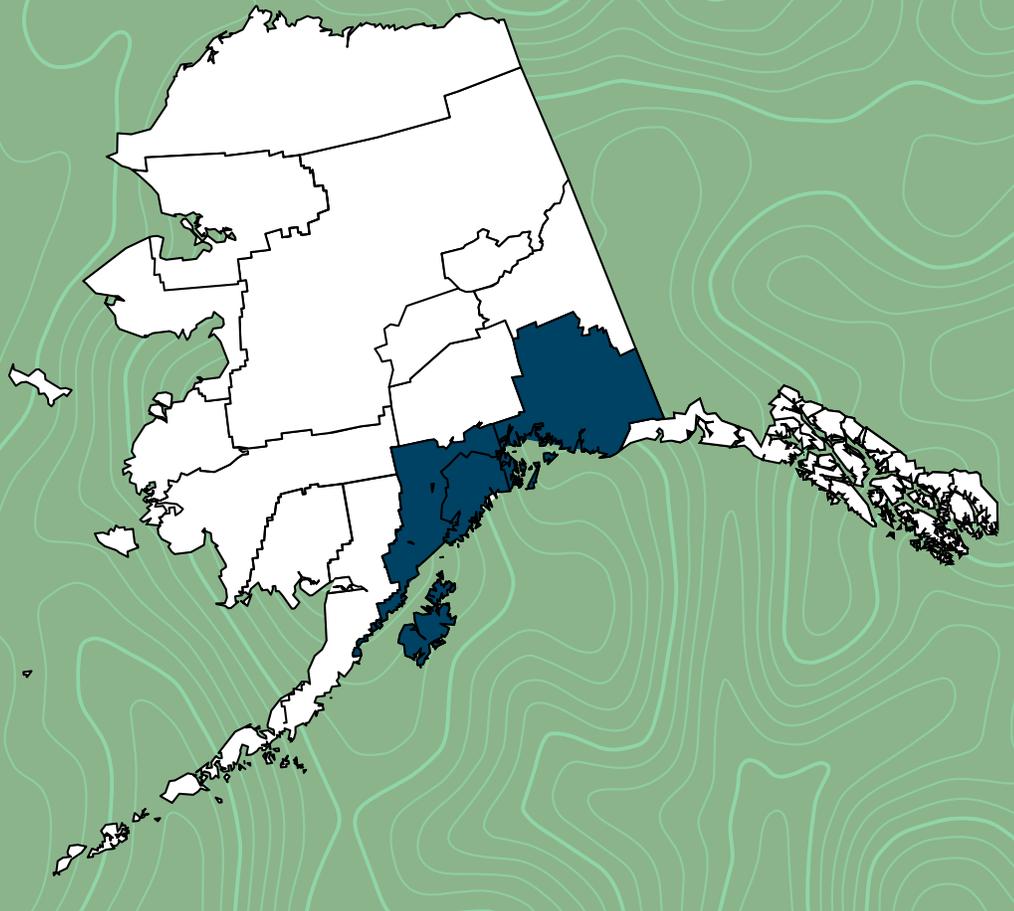


# ALASKA TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CONTROL REGIONAL PROFILE: **GULF COAST**



**FY2020**

# **Tobacco Prevention and Control Regional Profile: Gulf Coast Region**

December 2020

Produced by the Section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Tobacco Prevention and Control Program through a contract with Program Design and Evaluation Services, Multnomah County Health Department and Oregon Public Health Division.

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# Purpose

## ***Why tobacco prevention and control matters***

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified reducing tobacco use as one of the most important “winnable battles” in public health. A winnable battle is a priority with large impacts on health and known, effective strategies to address the priority.<sup>1</sup>
- Tobacco use remains Alaska’s leading preventable cause of disease and death. More Alaskans die from the direct effects of tobacco use than from suicide, motor vehicle crashes, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, homicide, and HIV/AIDS combined.<sup>2</sup>
- Tobacco use can lead to death earlier than expected, as well as millions of dollars in avoidable medical care costs.
- Quitting the use of all tobacco products is the best thing that Alaska tobacco users can do to improve their health and the health of those around them.

## ***How tobacco prevention and control works***

The CDC offers guidance to states about how to reduce tobacco use and related health concerns through tobacco prevention and control programs, described in Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs, 2014.<sup>3</sup> These best practices include comprehensive, sustained statewide tobacco control interventions that have been shown to reduce smoking rates, tobacco-related deaths, and diseases caused by smoking.

The State of Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control (TPC) Program is designed as recommended in CDC’s best practices, with the following program components:<sup>4</sup> state and community interventions; mass-reach health communication interventions; cessation interventions; surveillance and evaluation; and infrastructure, administration, and management. Within this structure, the program uses multiple interventions shown to work: a free telephone line to help people quit tobacco use with coaching and nicotine replacement therapy; a marketing campaign designed to prevent and reduce tobacco use; and grants that promote tobacco-free policies in communities, schools and health care organizations.<sup>1</sup> These program elements combine to address the goals of the TPC Program:

1. prevent youth from starting tobacco use
2. protect the public from exposure to secondhand smoke
3. promote quitting for tobacco users
4. identify and eliminate differences in tobacco use and related health problems between groups of people (sometimes called “disparities”)

## ***How to use this report***

TPC compiles regional profiles because tobacco use and factors related to tobacco use may vary considerably by region. Programs that are planned based on good information about community settings and the people who live there may be more effective than programs planned based on statewide information alone. Program

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *Winnable Battles* <http://www.cdc.gov/winnablebattles/>

<sup>2</sup> Alaska Tobacco Facts, 2019 Update. <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Tobacco/publications.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. CDC *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs – 2014*.  
[https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best\\_practices/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best_practices/index.htm)

<sup>4</sup> Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control (TPC) Program, *FY2019 Annual Report*  
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Tobacco/publications.aspx>

planners should use data from this report in combination with other sources, including the knowledge of people from communities.

This report summarizes available information that is meaningful for planning tobacco prevention and control efforts for individuals, communities, and the systems that serve them. Sections 3, 4, and 5 of this report specifically align with goals of the TPC Program.

- **Section 1. Region Overview:** Describes the region, including the communities, schools and people who live there.
- **Section 2. Measures of Tobacco Use:** Describes the current use of different tobacco or nicotine products (cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, vaping products) among adults and youth.
- **Section 3. Preventing Youth Use:** Shows that different groups of young people face higher or lower chances of using tobacco, and possible reasons for those differences; describes what policies are in place to prevent youth from starting to use.
- **Section 4. Helping People Quit:** Describes the percentage of adult tobacco users who are trying to quit and who have successfully quit.
- **Section 5. Eliminating Exposure to Secondhand Smoke:** Shows the percentage of adults and youth who are exposed to secondhand smoke and describes what policies are in place that protect people from exposure.
- **Appendices:** Technical documentation is provided to give additional detail about the information provided in this report. Information for all Alaska regions is included (not only the region for the individual profile). Appendices are available as a separate report alongside regional reports posted on the TPC Program website. Appendix A includes tables of data for all regions and the state, with specific language from survey questions. Appendix B describes some of the analytical methods in detail (including how race and other variables are determined). Appendix C provides more detail about the data sources.

# Methods

## Data sources

This report includes information from three primary Alaska public health data sources. These sources are summarized in Table 1, and more information is included in the Appendix.

**Table 1:** Summary of key data sources used for this report

Data Source (Abbreviation for report)	Description
Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (AK YRBS)	YRBS data are collected from students in grades 9-12 using anonymous and voluntary school-based questionnaires. The survey is conducted in the spring of odd-numbered years and participation requires parental consent. The YRBS includes questions about tobacco use and related factors. Statewide estimates are from a sample of traditional high schools across the state; regional estimates are based on all participating traditional high schools in the region. Data from alternative schools and correctional schools are not included in this report.  Regional YRBS data are reported from the most recent AK YRBS only. In 2019, three of the Gulf Coast Region’s six school districts participated: Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, Kodiak Island Borough School District and Valdez City School District.
Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (AK BRFSS)	BRFSS is an anonymous telephone survey of adults ages 18 and older, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and implemented in all states. It is a primary source of information about adult health and related behaviors. Alaska has added multiple questions about tobacco use to the state’s survey.  Most regional data reported are from the 2016-2018 AK BRFSS combined.
Alaska DAtabase for Policies on Tobacco (ADAPT)	The Alaska TPC Program collects and maintains information on tobacco-related policies using the ADAPT database. Policies monitored include smokefree tribal resolutions, community ordinances, multi-unit housing policies, healthcare policies, secondary education policies, and taxes. Policies are evaluated and scored in comparison to a model policy, by policy type.  Local policy information in this report was obtained from ADAPT during May 2020.

In addition to the primary data sources listed in Table 1, which appear in multiple sections of this report, other data sources that are referenced only once are cited as they appear in the text (for example, population data and Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line data). For all data sources in this report, people who report being American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN) are described using the term “Alaska Native” because this reflects the majority of that population; further detail about how race is collected and reported for each dataset is available in the Appendix.

## Analytic approaches

*Survey estimates.* A great deal of this report relies on data collected through surveys. These are referred to as “estimates” because we have responses from only a sample of the population and not the whole population. We match respondent characteristics such as age, gender, and race to known characteristics of the state population, and statistically adjust the estimates to represent the true population. Sometimes this is called “weighting” the

data. For example, more women than men usually participate in surveys, so more survey respondents are women although the actual populations of women and men are about equal in size. Since women often report different information on surveys than men, statistical processes are used to create estimates that balance the answers from women and men equally when reporting on the whole population.

*Confidence intervals.* Our report uses 95% confidence intervals, especially when describing results from survey data. Confidence intervals show a range that is likely to contain the true value for the population; we can be 95% sure (95 out of 100 times) that the range of the interval contains the “true value” of the indicator being measured. Confidence intervals also help to compare whether results from one group are significantly different from another group: when confidence intervals for two estimates in the same data system do not overlap, those two estimates are “significantly” different from one another – meaning we can be reasonably sure there is a true difference. In this report, confidence intervals are shown visually in different ways: as shaded areas around lines in trend graphs, as “whiskers” around the estimates in bar graphs, and as a numeric range in tables. Although they look different, they mean the same thing.

Larger samples typically have smaller, more precise confidence intervals. Figures in this report that show trends in tobacco product use for the state and region show confidence intervals only for state-level data, in order to make the figures easier to view; regional confidence intervals will always be wider or larger. The confidence intervals for regional data are included in the technical appendix tables for this report. Whenever regional estimates are statistically different from the state based on formal statistical comparisons, that is noted in the text describing the data or figure. Although differences between the state and region may look large, they are not statistically significant unless noted in the text – in other words, they may be just chance differences.

*Suppression of small numbers.* Estimates from surveys with small numbers are suppressed based on guidelines from the State of Alaska. For BRFSS, a minimum denominator of 50 unweighted respondents is required for reporting; for YRBS, a minimum of 100 is required. Measures that do not meet these minimum denominator requirements are not included in this report. Estimates considered statistically unstable may also be flagged or suppressed.

*Rounded estimates for subgroups.* Survey data shown in figures or tables within the main body of this report are rounded to whole numbers. This is because survey estimates for smaller numbers of people in subgroups often have wider confidence intervals, so rounded estimates are one way of showing that subgroup estimates are less precise than estimates for the whole population. All estimates (including for subgroups) are reported to one decimal place, with confidence intervals, in the Appendix.

## Limitations

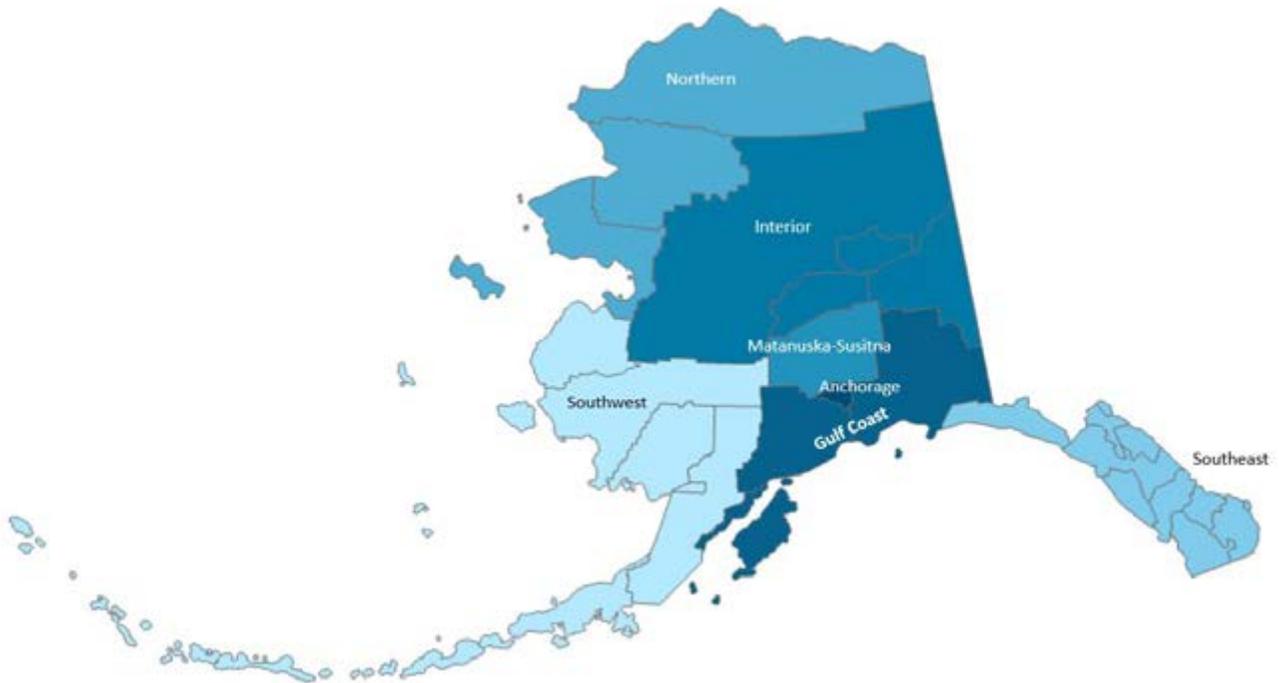
*Local area data.* Stakeholders working in tobacco control within local communities would likely be interested in more specific data about borough or census areas, cities, and villages. Most surveys do not have enough respondents to report local-level results. This report was designed to provide as much data as possible at the regional level, while maintaining high data quality. Some data may be available at a local level but not included in this report, because of concerns about confidentiality. For example, individual school data may be available and examined in partnership with school administrators, but it is not published in this report because it could contain identifiable information.

*YRBS regional data.* Official state estimates for YRBS data are based on a scientifically selected statewide sample of schools and students. Regional data include a combination of the scientific statewide sample, and schools that volunteered to participate as part of a local sample. For this reason, regional estimates may not be generalizable to all students in the region.

## Section 1. Region Overview

This report includes information about the Gulf Coast Public Health Region. This region is made up of the Kenai Peninsula and Kodiak Island Boroughs, and the Valdez-Cordova Census Area.

**Figure 1:** Alaska has seven Public Health Regions.



**Figure 2:** There are three Boroughs and Census Areas in the Gulf Coast Region.



**Table 2 series:** There are some differences in populations by subregion in the Gulf Coast Region.

**Table 2a:** Total population size in State, Region, and Borough/Census Areas

Geographic area	Total number	Percentage	Number of households
State of Alaska	731,007		258,058
Gulf Coast Region	80,866	11% of state	30,757
Kenai Peninsula Borough	58,367	72% of region	22,161
Kodiak Island Borough	13,001	16% of region	4,630
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	9,498	12% of region	3,966

**Table 2b:** Characteristics of people in State, Region, and Borough/Census Areas

Geographic area	Age		Race: alone or in combination					
	% Adult	Median age	Alaska Native	African American	Asian	Pacific Islander	White	Hispanic*
State of Alaska	75%	35.5	19%	5%	8%	2%	67%	7%
Gulf Coast Region	77%	40.1	13%	1%	6%	1%	78%	5%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	78%	41.8	12%	1%	3%	1%	84%	4%
Kodiak Island Borough	74%	34.8	17%	2%	23%	1%	57%	8%
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	76%	38.6	18%	2%	5%	1%	74%	5%

\*Hispanic ethnicity can be any race

**Table 2c:** Economic factors affecting people in State, Region, and Borough/Census Areas

Geographic area	Unemployment		Poverty
	February 2020	April 2020	2019
State of Alaska	6%	14%	11%
Gulf Coast Region	7%	16%	11%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	7%	17%	12%
Kodiak Island Borough	4%	11%	9%
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	11%	14%	8%

Sources: Table 2a and 2b, unemployment in 2c: Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section; Table 2c poverty from U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year estimates for 2014-2018, and 2017 federal poverty guidelines for Alaska. For more detail, see technical appendix for this report.

About 80,866 people lived in the Gulf Coast Region of Alaska in 2019, making up 11% of the state's population.

- The majority of the people and households in this region are in the Kenai Peninsula Borough (Table 2a).
- The region's median age is slightly older than the statewide population; but Kodiak Island Borough is younger than the state population (Table 2b).
- Between 12-18% of people in each borough or census area are Alaska Native, fewer than the statewide percentage. A majority (more than 70%) of people in Kenai Peninsula and the Valdez-Cordova subregions are White race; Kodiak Island Borough has a greater percentage of people who are Asian and Hispanic than other areas of the region (Table 2b).
- Unemployment increased dramatically statewide and in the region between February and April 2020, associated with the worldwide COVID pandemic. Relative patterns were similar for the two time points. For the Gulf Coast Region, unemployment was slightly higher than statewide; within the region, unemployment was greater in the Valdez-Cordova Census Area and Kenai Peninsula Borough than in the Kodiak Island Borough (Table 2c).

- Within the region, poverty was greater in the Kenai Peninsula Borough, less in Kodiak Island Borough, and lowest in the Valdez-Cordova Census Area (Table 2c).

### ***Alaska Native Communities***

A variety of entities play a role in tobacco prevention and control in Alaska Native communities, establishing public policies, organizational rules, and practices for delivering services. There are 229 federally recognized tribes in Alaska,<sup>5</sup> but unlike other tribes in the United States, Alaska Native tribes do not have a land base (e.g., reservations).<sup>6</sup> Instead, Alaska Native land ownership and governance occur through separate entities.

*Alaska Native Regional Corporations* were established when the US Congress passed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971. ANCSA provided for the establishment of 12 regional corporations, owned by Alaska Native shareholders, to manage their lands. Each of the 12 regions also has an Alaska Native regional non-profit organization that provides social services and health care for Alaska Native people. These tribal healthcare systems play an important role in tobacco prevention and helping people quit.

Alaska's Public Health Regions do not align with Alaska Native regional corporations, so some corporations span across multiple public health regions. The Gulf Coast region overlaps with the following four ANCSA Alaska Native Regional Corporations and their related non-profit Alaska Native associations.<sup>7</sup>

- Ahtna, Incorporated; Copper River Native Association
- Cook Inlet Region, Incorporated; Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Incorporated
- Chugach Alaska Corporation; Chugachmiut, Incorporated
- Koniag, Incorporated; Kodiak Area Native Association

*Alaska Native village corporations* are owned by Alaska Native Tribe shareholders from specific communities, managing those lands and passing community policies for the people in these areas. Actions can include tribal resolutions or local taxes. Tribal resolutions express the consensus positions of the tribe as an entity. Resolutions can be passed by tribal governments to implement policies within a tribe, or to indicate support for a broader political priority, such as the recent passage of Alaska's smokefree air law.

- There are about 30 total individual federally recognized tribes in the Gulf Coast Region.

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<sup>5</sup> Federal Register Vol 85, No 20. January 30, 2020. Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior, 85 FR 5462. Document 2020-01707. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-01-30/pdf/2020-01707.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> With one exception: Metlakatla Indian Community's Annette Island Reserve was established as the only Indian reservation in Alaska, as the community opted out of ANCSA.

<sup>7</sup> Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, Division of Corporations, ANCSA Information. Retrieved from <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/corporations/ancsainformation.aspx>

**School Districts**

**Table 3.** School district enrollment and student population varies within the Gulf Coast Region.

Geographic Area	Student characteristics		
	Total students in grades K-12	% Alaska Native students (K-12)	Total high school students
Alaska	128,589	22%	38,051
Gulf Coast Region Schools	12,799	12%	3,859
Chugach Schools	478	10%	148
Copper River Schools	455	38%	140
Cordova City Schools	325	20%	94
Kenai Peninsula Borough Schools	8,619	8%	2,627
Kodiak Island Borough Schools	2,236	20%	661
Valdez City Schools	686	8%	189

Source: Alaska Department of Education and Early Development: Assessment and Accountability, <http://education.alaska.gov/stats/> Enrollment is for October 1, 2019. Student race is based on self-identification according to five mutually exclusive categories, including American Indian/Alaska Native <https://education.alaska.gov/tls/Assessments/naep/orientation/l1s10006.htm>.

School systems play an important role in providing tobacco prevention education, establishing and enforcing policies that keep youth from using tobacco, implementing interventions for youth who experiment with tobacco, and limiting adults from modeling tobacco use behaviors and exposing others to secondhand smoke.

About 12,799 students were enrolled in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in the Gulf Coast Region’s six school districts in October 2019, making up about 10% of Alaska’s student population.

- About two-thirds of the region’s students were enrolled in the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, 17% were in the Kodiak Island Borough School District, and 3-5% were in each of the other four districts.
- The percentage of Alaska Native students varied by school district, from 8% in the Kenai Peninsula Borough and Valdez City School Districts, to 38% in the Copper River School District.
- High school students, who are more likely to use tobacco or nicotine products than younger students, make up 28-31% of the total student population in each school district in the region.

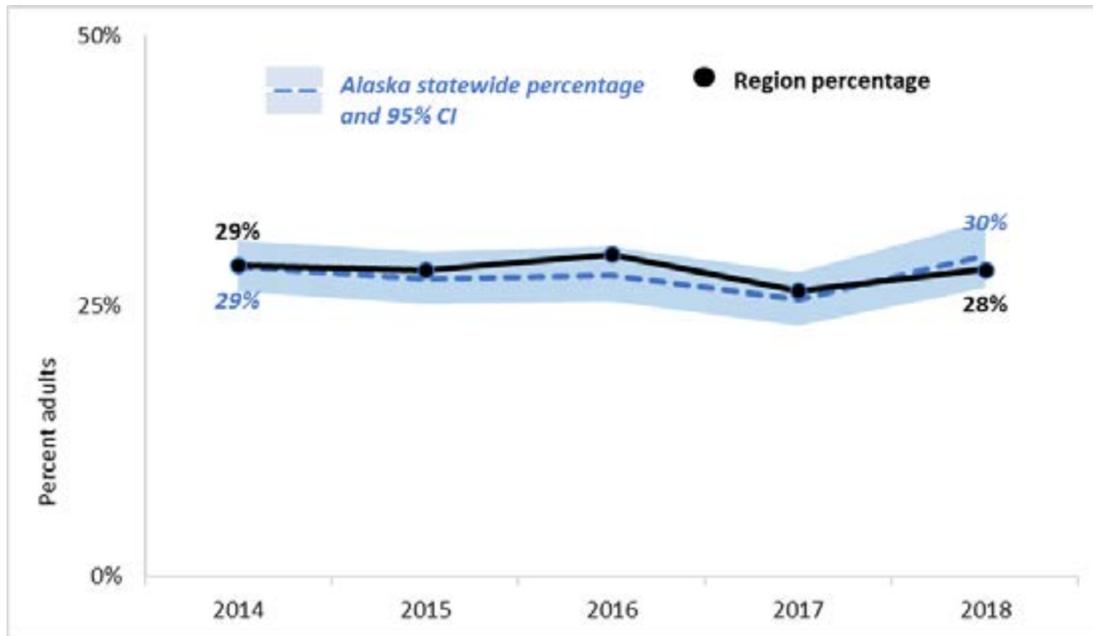
## Section 2. Tobacco Use

This section of the report describes tobacco and nicotine product use among adults and youth in the Gulf Coast Region and statewide.

### Adult Tobacco Use

Current use of any tobacco products

**Figure 3.** The percentage of adults who use any tobacco or nicotine product did not significantly change during the last 5 years in the Gulf Coast Region.



Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Alaska statewide	29%	28%	28%	26%	30%
Gulf Coast Region	29%	28%	30%	26%	28%

Source: AK BRFSS supplemental file, 2014-2018. Includes the percentage of adults who used cigarettes, smokeless tobacco (including iqmik), electronic vapor products, cigars, or hookah in the past 30 days. Measure is reported since 2014 because this is when electronic vapor products questions were added to the BRFSS.

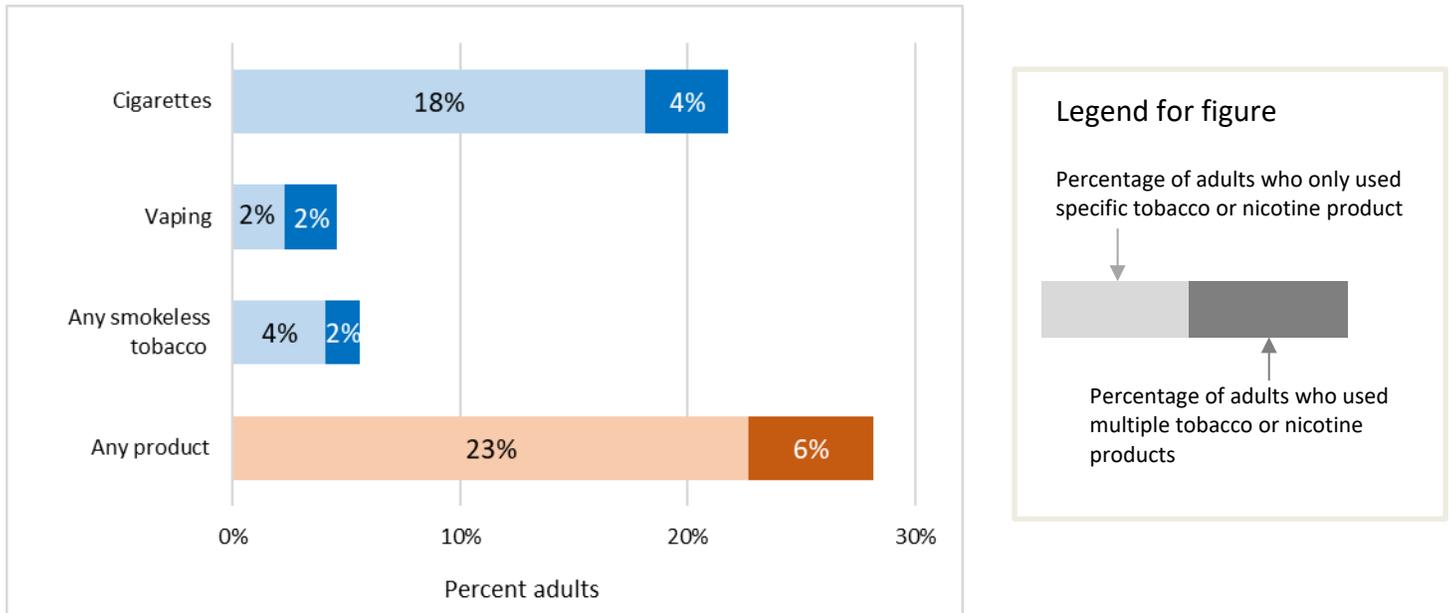
Reducing the use of any tobacco or nicotine product among adults is an important priority in the State of Alaska. The specific *Healthy Alaskans 2030*<sup>8</sup> priority indicator that is monitored to assess progress is: *Reduce the percentage of adults who currently smoke cigarettes or use electronic vapor products, smokeless tobacco, or other tobacco products (which include cigars and hookah).*

- Between 2014 and 2018, the percentage of Alaska adults who currently use any tobacco or nicotine product remained stable. In 2018, 30% of adults statewide currently used some form of tobacco or nicotine.
- The percentage of adults who use tobacco or nicotine in the Gulf Coast Region has also been stable, and is not significantly different from the statewide percentage. In 2018, 28% of adults in the Gulf Coast Region used tobacco or nicotine.
- Based on the most recent percentage of adults who use tobacco or nicotine, there are more than 17,400 adults in the Gulf Coast Region who are at risk of harming their health by using these products.

<sup>8</sup> For more information about Healthy Alaskans 2030 see <https://www.healthyalaskans.org/>

## Current use of specific tobacco products

**Figure 4.** Cigarettes remain the most commonly used tobacco product among adults in the Gulf Coast Region. Adults who vape are most likely to also use other tobacco products.



Gulf Coast Region Product type	% who used at least once in past 30 days, among all adults			% who used every day in past 30 days, among all adults (not shown in figure above)
	Only one product used	Used multiple products	Used alone or in combination*	
Cigarettes	18%	4%	<b>22%</b>	16%
Vaping products	2%	2%	<b>5%</b>	2%
Any smokeless tobacco	4%	2%	<b>6%</b>	4%
<b>Any tobacco product</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>28%</b>	—

Source: AK BRFSS 2016-2018 combined file for cigarettes, vaping, and smokeless products alone; modified file for any tobacco product. Everyday use for any tobacco product was not calculated.

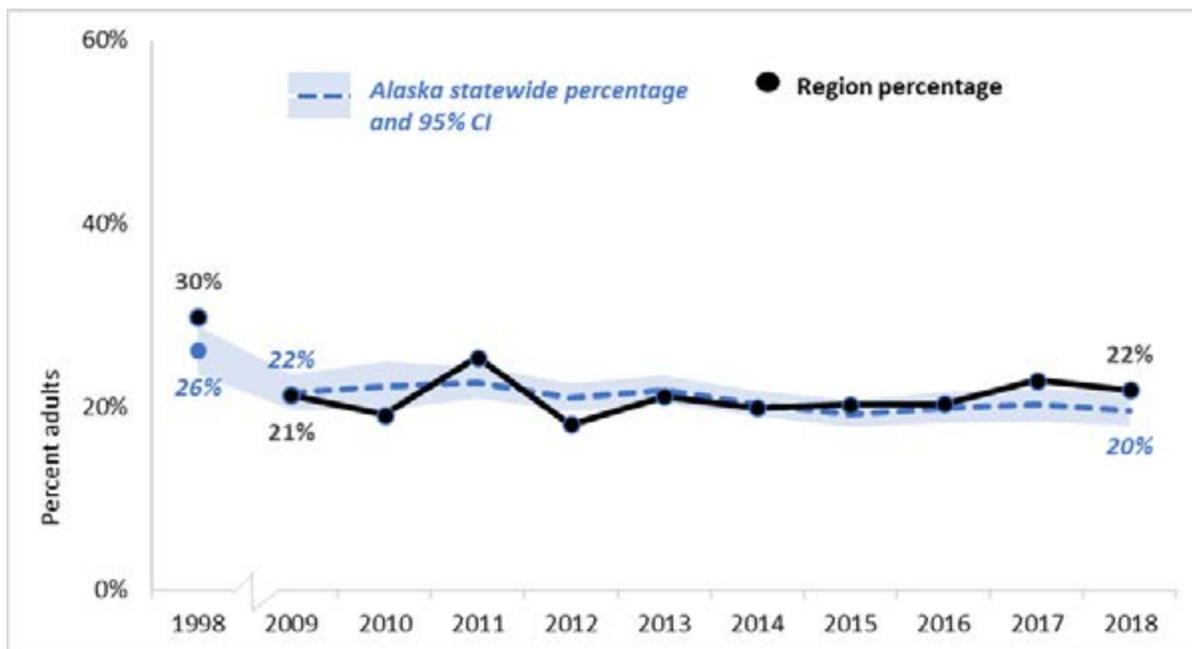
\*numbers may not match sum of “one product” and “multiple product” values due to rounding

In the Gulf Coast Region, 28% of adults currently used some form of tobacco or nicotine product in 2016-2018.

- Cigarettes are the most commonly used product. 20% of Gulf Coast Region adults smoked cigarettes. Fewer adults used electronic vaping products like e-cigarettes (5%) and smokeless tobacco (6%). Additionally, 3% of adults smoked cigars or cigarillos, or used a hookah (data included in Appendix).
- Most Gulf Coast Region adults who smoked cigarettes and used smokeless tobacco used only those products. About half of adults who used vaping products also currently used other tobacco products such as cigarettes or smokeless tobacco.
- Most Gulf Coast Region adults who used cigarettes and smokeless tobacco used them every day. Only about half of adults who vaped used those products every day.

## Cigarette smoking

**Figure 5.** The percentage of adults who smoke cigarettes decreased statewide during the past 10 years, but did not significantly change in the Gulf Coast Region during that time.

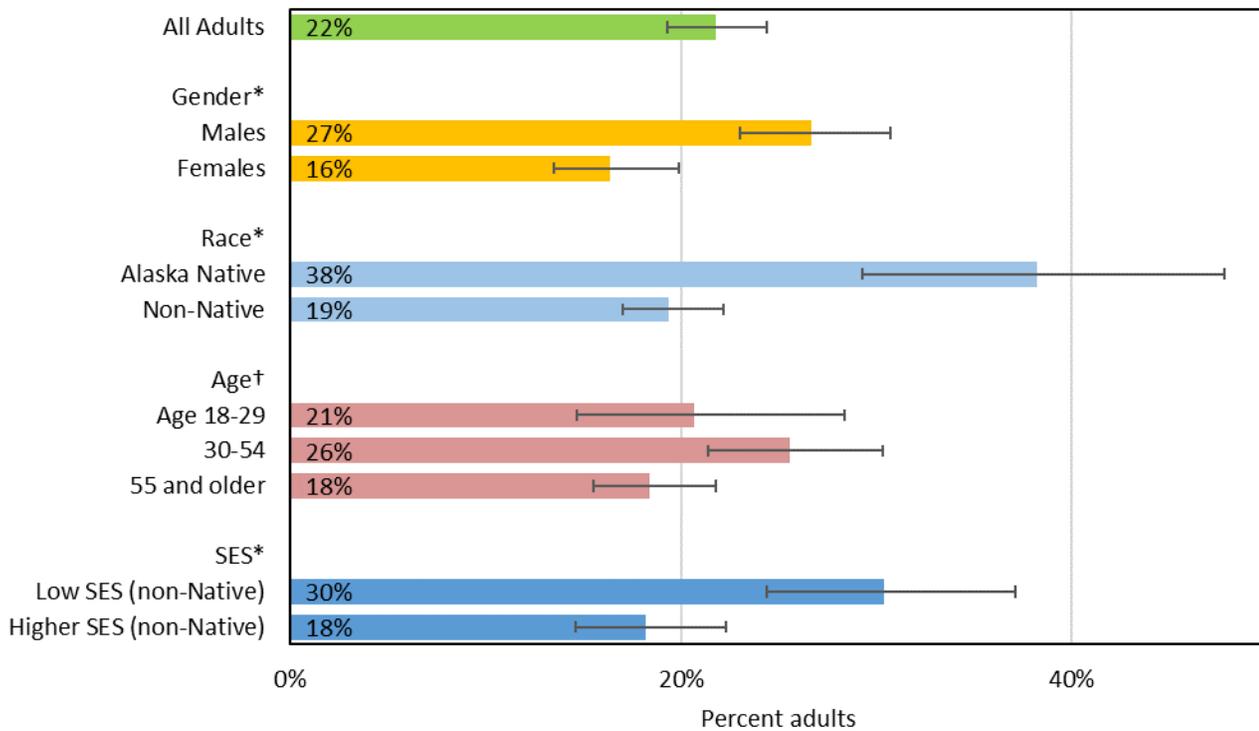


Year	1998	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Alaska Statewide	26%	22%	22%	23%	21%	22%	20%	19%	20%	20%	20%
Gulf Coast Region	30%	21%	19%	25%	18%	21%	20%	20%	20%	23%	22%

Source: AK BRFSS combined file

- Adult smoking declined significantly since the start of Alaska’s tobacco prevention and control efforts. Statewide, adult smoking declined from 26% in 1998 to 20% in 2018.
- In the Gulf Coast Region, 30% of adults were smoking in 1998, and 22% were smoking in 2018. Adult smoking in the Gulf Coast Region did not change significantly during the past 10 years.
- The percentage of adults who smoked in the Gulf Coast Region between 2009 and 2018 is not significantly different from statewide.
- Based on the most recent percentage of adults who smoke, there are more than 13,500 adults in the Gulf Coast Region who are at risk of harming their health by smoking cigarettes.

**Figure 6.** In the Gulf Coast Region, the percentage of adults who currently smoke cigarettes varies by subgroup.



\* Significant difference between or among subgroups

† Significant contrasts between ages 30-54 and 55 and older

Source: AK BRFSS 2016-2018 combined file

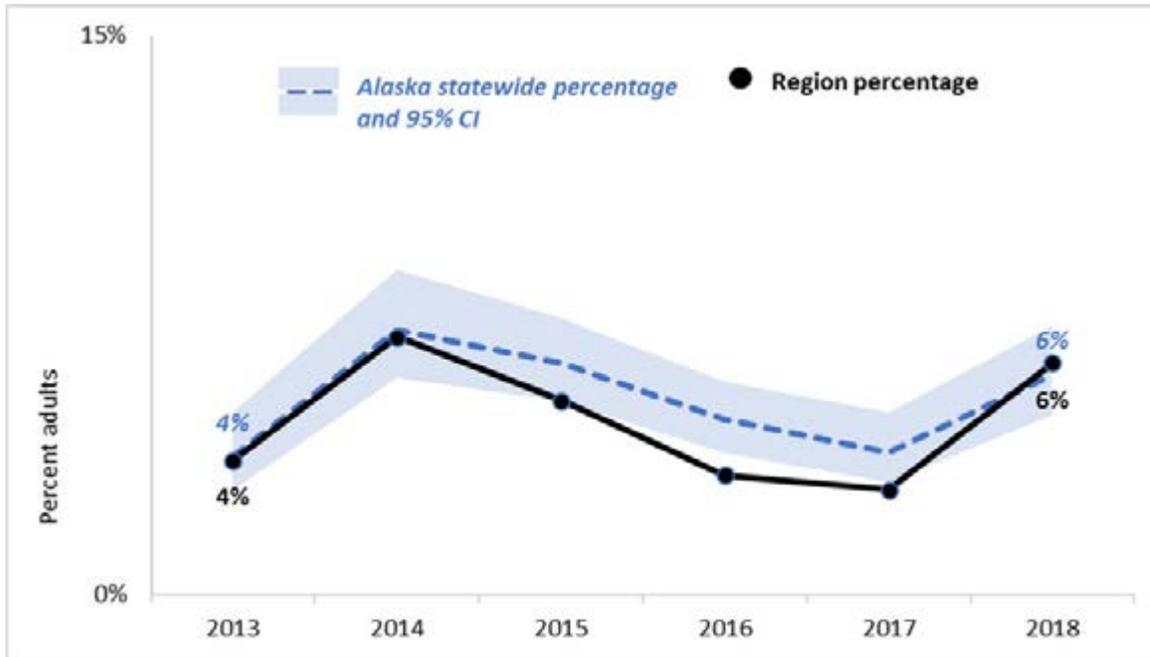
Within the Gulf Coast Region during 2016-2018, cigarette smoking was:

- Higher among males than females (27% vs. 16%)
- Higher among Alaska Native people than among non-Native people (38% vs. 19%)
- Higher among adults 30-54 than adults 55 and older (26% vs. 18%)
- Not significantly different between adults 18-29 and adults 30-54 (21% and 26%), and similar between adults 18-29 and adults 55 and older (21% and 18%)
- Higher among people with low socioeconomic status (SES) than among those of higher SES (30% vs. 18%)

## Electronic vapor product use

Electronic vapor products include e-cigarettes, vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods. These products are battery-powered, and usually contain nicotine and flavors such as fruit, mint, or candy.

**Figure 7:** The percentage of adults who use electronic vapor products has not changed significantly during the past 6 years statewide; use did not change significantly in the Gulf Coast Region.

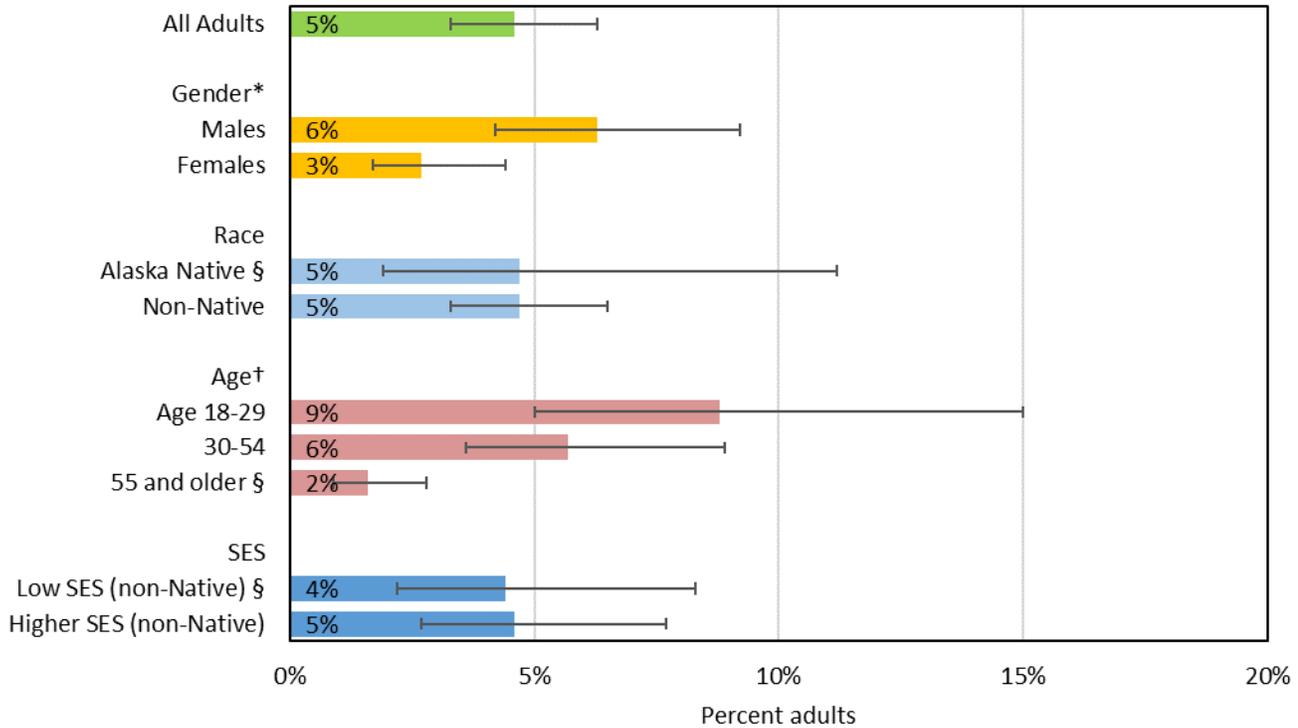


Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Alaska statewide	4%	7%	6%	5%	4%	6%
Gulf Coast Region	4%	7%	5%	3%	3%	6%

Source: AK BRFSS combined file

- Use of electronic vapor products (such as e-cigarettes) has not changed significantly during the past six years statewide, from 4% in 2013 to 6% in 2018.
- In the Gulf Coast Region, 4% of adults used electronic vapor products in 2013 and 6% in 2018. This regional change is not statistically significant, partially due to smaller sample size.
- For all recent years, the percentage of adults who use electronic vapor products in the Gulf Coast Region has been similar to the state; differences between the region and state are not statistically significant.
- Based on the most recent percentage of adults who use e-cigarettes, there are more than 3,800 adults in the Gulf Coast Region who are at risk of harming their health by vaping.

**Figure 8:** In the Gulf Coast Region, the percentage of adults who currently use e-cigarettes varies by gender and age group.



\* Significant difference between or among subgroups

† Significant contrasts between ages 18-29 and 55 and older, ages 30-54 and 55 and older

§ Interpret this estimate with caution. See Appendix for additional detail.

Source: AK BRFSS 2016-2018 combined file

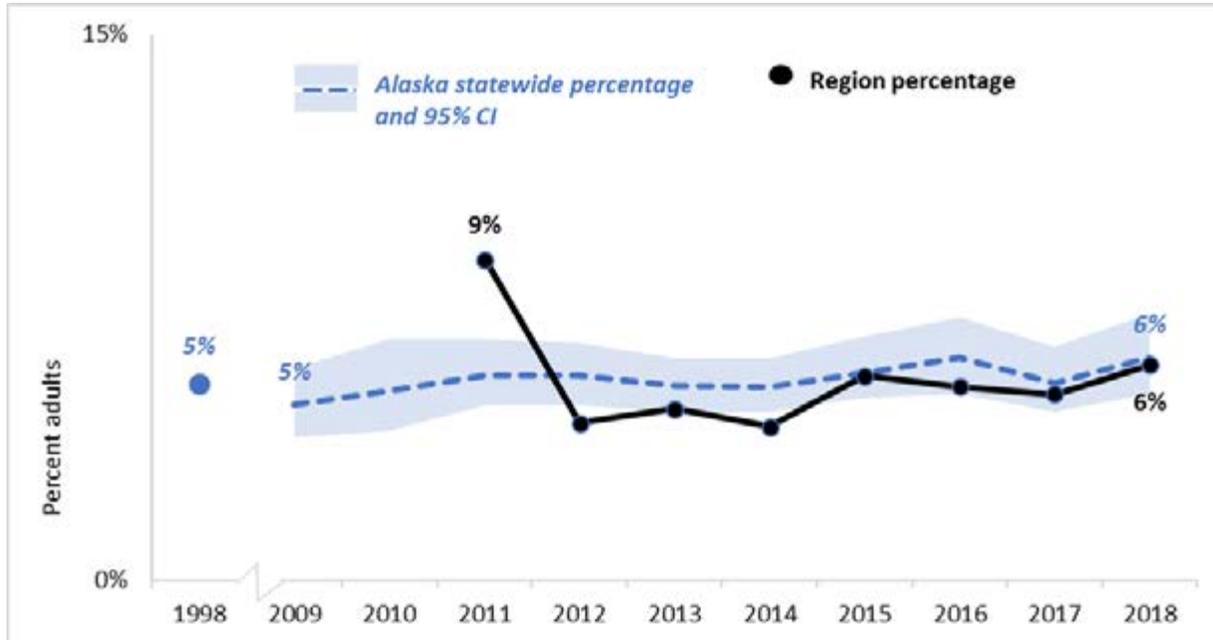
Within the Gulf Coast Region during 2016-2018, e-cigarette use was:

- Higher among males than females (6% vs. 3%)
- Similar among Alaska Native people and non-Native people (5% for both)
- Higher among adults 18-29 than adults 55 and older (9% vs. 2%), and higher among adults 30-54 than adults ages 55 and older (6% vs. 2%)
- Similar among adults 18-29 and adults 30-54 (9% and 6%)
- Similar among people with low socioeconomic status (SES) and those of higher SES (4% and 5%)

## Smokeless tobacco use

Smokeless tobacco includes commercial products like chew, dip, snus, snuff, and dissolvable tobacco products. People in some regions of Alaska also use a unique traditional smokeless tobacco form called “iqmik” or “blackbull”, which is a mixture of tobacco leaf and punk ash.

**Figure 9:** The percentage of adults who use smokeless tobacco has not significantly changed during recent years in the Gulf Coast Region.

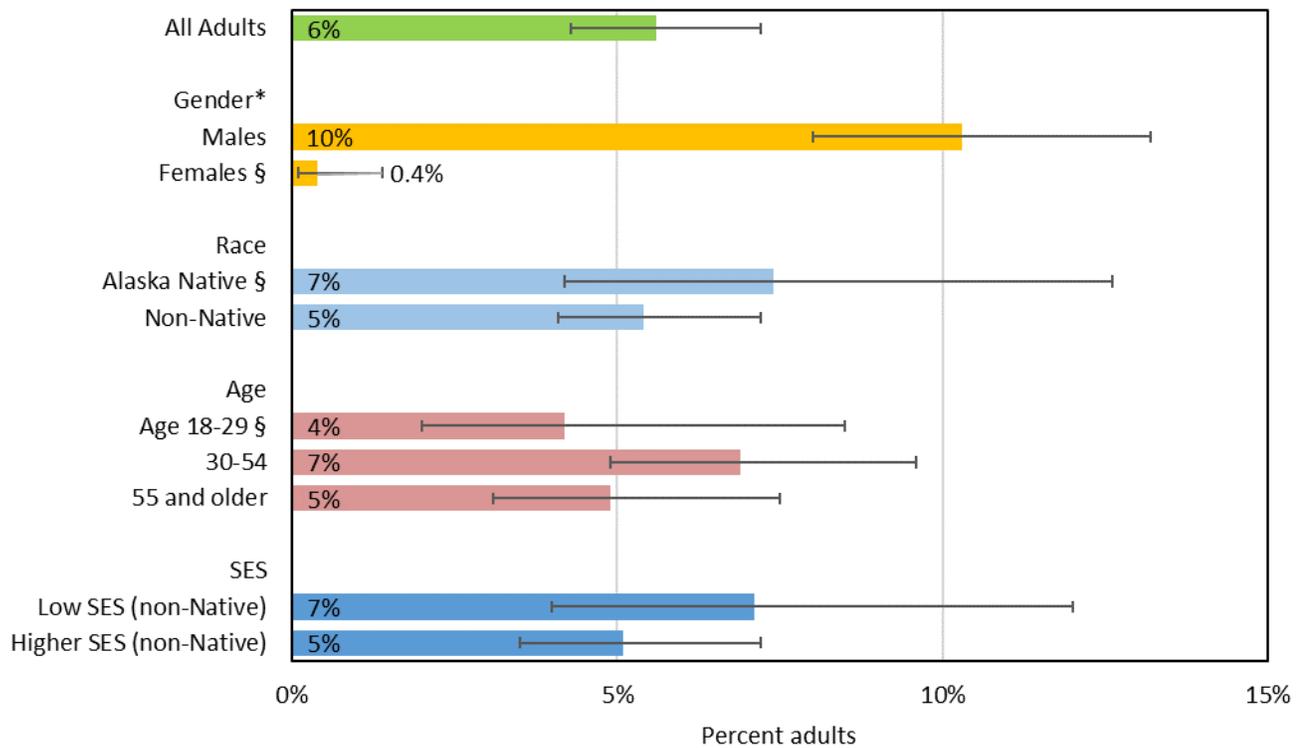


Year	1998	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Alaska statewide	5%	5%	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%	6%	6%	5%	6%
Gulf Coast Region	--	--	--	9%	4%	5%	4%	6%	5%	5%	6%

Source: AK BRFSS combined file. Regional estimates are reported from 2011 because small numbers of surveys during early years do not allow for regional estimates.

- Smokeless tobacco use (including chew, dip, snus, snuff, and iqmik) among Alaska adults has not changed significantly over time. Statewide, 5% of adults used smokeless tobacco in 1998, and 6% in 2018.
- The percentage of adults who used smokeless tobacco has not changed over time in the Gulf Coast Region: 9% used in 2011 and 6% used in 2018.
- For 2011-2018, the percentage of adults who use smokeless tobacco in the Gulf Coast Region has been similar to the state; differences between the region and state are not statistically significant.
- Based on the most recent percentage of adults who use smokeless tobacco, there are more than 3,700 adults in the Gulf Coast Region who are at risk of harming their health by using smokeless tobacco.

**Figure 10:** In the Gulf Coast Region, the percentage of adults who currently use smokeless tobacco varies by gender; differences between other groups are not significant.



\* Significant difference between or among subgroups  
 § Interpret this estimate with caution. See Appendix for additional detail.

Source: AK BRFSS 2016-2018 combined file

Within the Gulf Coast Region during 2016-2018, smokeless tobacco use was:

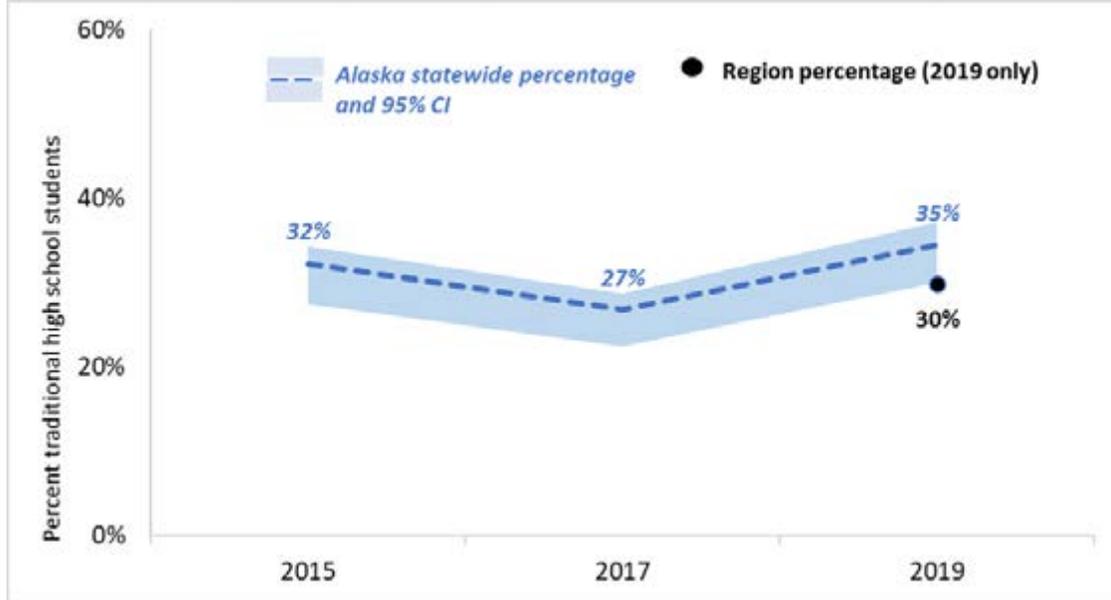
- Higher among males than females (10% vs. 0.4%)
- Similar among Alaska Native people and non-Native people (7% and 5%)
- Similar among adults 18-29 and adults 30-54 (4% and 7%), similar among adults 18-29 and adults 55 and older (4% and 5%), and similar among adults 30-54 and adults 55 and older (7% and 5%)
- Similar by socioeconomic status (SES) (7% among those with lower SES and 5% among those with higher SES)

## Youth Tobacco Use

In the following charts, statewide YRBS data are reported for all available years and regional data are only reported for 2019. Statewide data are based on a sample designed to represent high school students across the state, while regional data are limited to schools that voluntarily participate in the YRBS. Due to variations in school district, school, and student participation over time, differences in regional data from year to year may be driven more by changes in participation than by real changes in tobacco use among students. For this reason, data trends are presented for statewide but not regional estimates.

### Current use of any tobacco products

**Figure 11.** The percentage of high school students who currently use any tobacco or nicotine product did not significantly change during the last 5 years in Alaska; the Gulf Coast Region was similar to the state in 2019.



Year	2015	2017	2019
Alaska statewide	32%	27%	35%
Gulf Coast Region	--	--	30%

Source: Alaska YRBS, 2015-2019. Includes the percentage of students who used cigarettes, smokeless tobacco (including iqmik), electronic vapor products, or cigars in the past 30 days. Questions about electronic vapor product use were added to the Alaska YRBS in 2015. JUUL was added to these questions in 2019.

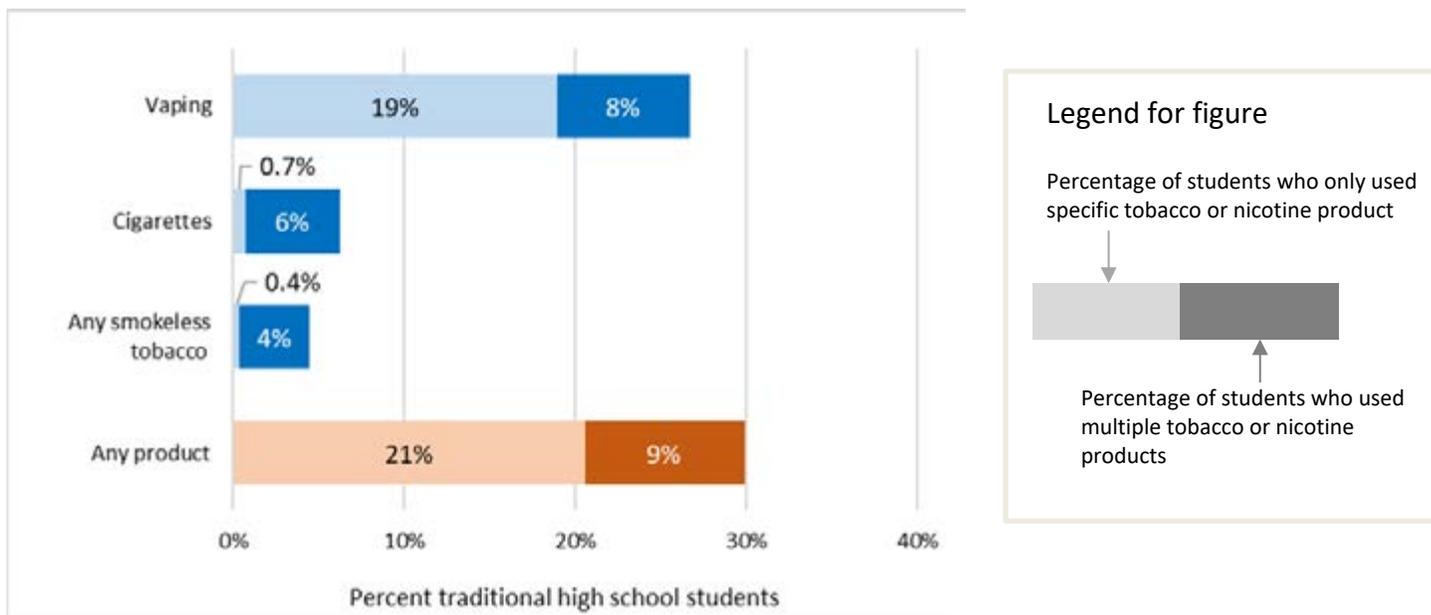
Reducing the use of any tobacco or nicotine product among youth is an important priority in the State of Alaska. The *Healthy Alaskans 2030*<sup>9</sup> priority indicator that is monitored to assess progress is: *Reduce the percentage of adolescents who have used electronic vapor products, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or other tobacco products (e.g., cigars) in the last 30 days.*

- This measure is reported beginning in 2015, the first year that questions about e-cigarettes were added to the Alaska YRBS.
- Between 2015 and 2019, the percentage of high school students who currently used any tobacco or nicotine product statewide varied, but the change over time is non-significant.
- In the Gulf Coast Region, 30% of students currently used a tobacco or nicotine product in 2019, which is not significantly different from the statewide percentage of 35%.
- Based on the most recent percentage of students who use tobacco or nicotine products, there are more than 1,200 students in the Gulf Coast Region who are at risk of harming their health by using these products.

<sup>9</sup> For more information about Healthy Alaskans 2030 see <https://www.healthyalaskans.org/>

## Current use of specific tobacco products

**Figure 12.** E-cigarettes were the most commonly used tobacco products among students in the Gulf Coast Region in 2019. Students who vape are the most likely to use those tobacco products exclusively.



Gulf Coast Region	% who used in past 30 days, among high school students			% who used 20+ of past 30 days, among all high school students (not shown in figure above)
	Only one product used	Used multiple products	Used alone or in combination*	
Vaping products	19%	8%	27%	9%
Cigarettes	0.7%	6%	6%	2%
Any smokeless tobacco	0.4%	4%	4%	1%
<b>Any tobacco product</b>	21%	9%	<b>30%</b>	--

\*numbers may not match sum of "one product" and "multiple product" values due to rounding

Source: AK YRBS 2019, all participating traditional high schools from the region. 20-day use for any tobacco product was not calculated.

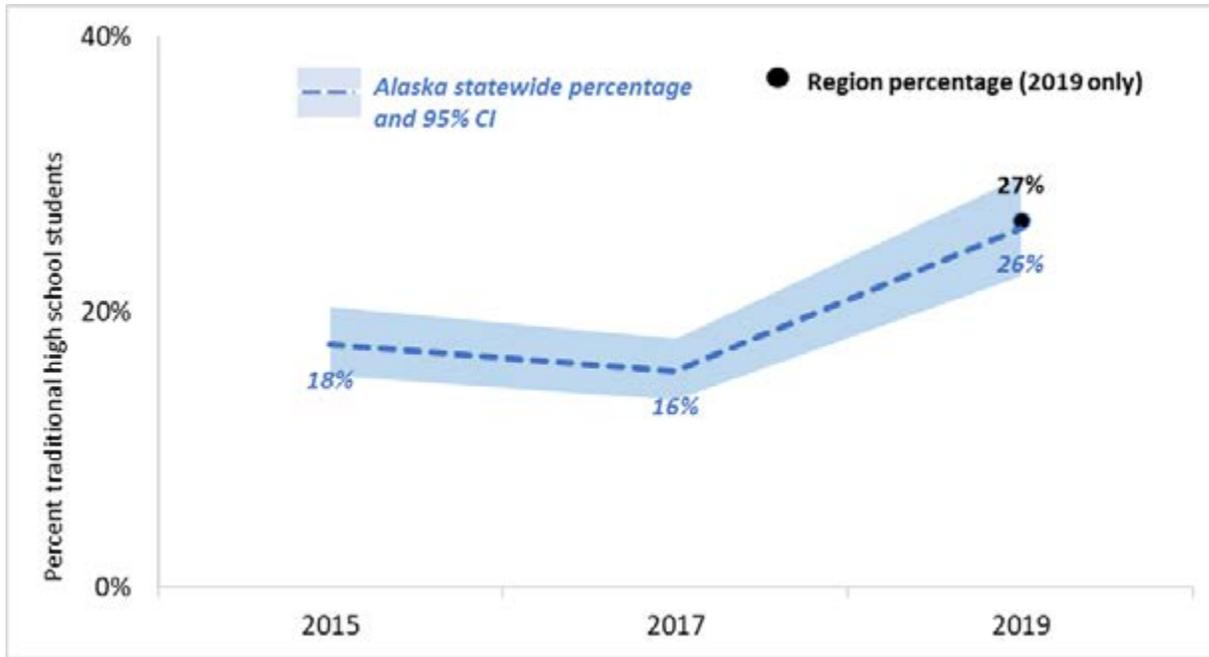
In the Gulf Coast Region, 30% of students currently used some form of tobacco or nicotine product in 2019.

- E-cigarettes were the most commonly used product (27% of all students); fewer students used cigarettes (6%) and smokeless tobacco (4%).
- Most Gulf Coast Region students who used e-cigarettes used only those products (19% of all students only vaped, and did not use other tobacco products). Most students who used cigarettes or smokeless tobacco used more than one product.
- 6% of Gulf Coast students currently used cigars (data available in Appendix). Nearly all of the students surveyed who used cigars also used other tobacco or nicotine products.
- A minority of the students who used tobacco or nicotine products did so on most days (9% of all students used vaping products on 20 or more of the past 30 days).

## Electronic vapor product use

Electronic vapor products include e-cigarettes, vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods. These products are battery-powered, and usually contain nicotine and flavors such as fruit, mint, or candy.

**Figure 13:** The percentage of high school students who currently use any e-cigarette product increased during the last 5 years in Alaska; the Gulf Coast Region was similar to the statewide percentage in 2019.

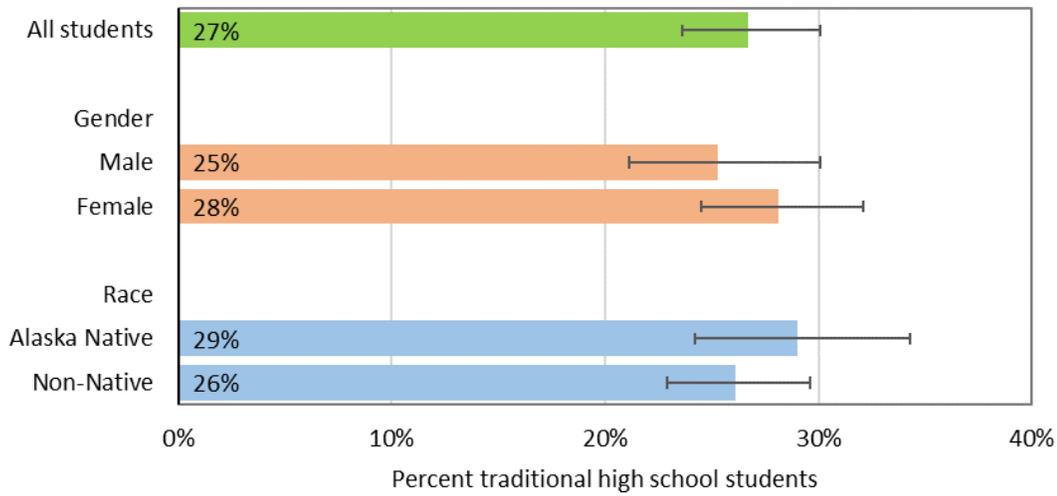


Year	2015	2017	2019
Alaska statewide	18%	16%	26%
Gulf Coast Region	--	--	27%

Source: AK YRBS 2015-2019, Alaska state sample of traditional high schools; all participating traditional high schools from the region. These questions were added to the Alaska YRBS in 2015. JUUL was added to questions about electronic vapor product use in 2019.

- The percentage of high school students who currently vape increased statewide, from 18% in 2015 to 26% in 2019.
- In the Gulf Coast Region, 27% of students currently used an e-cigarette in 2019, which is not significantly different from the state percentage of 26%.
- Based on the most recent percentage of students who used e-cigarettes, there are more than 1,000 students in the Gulf Coast Region who are at risk of harming their health by vaping.

**Figure 14:** In the Gulf Coast Region, the percentage of high school students currently using e-cigarettes is similar among subgroups.



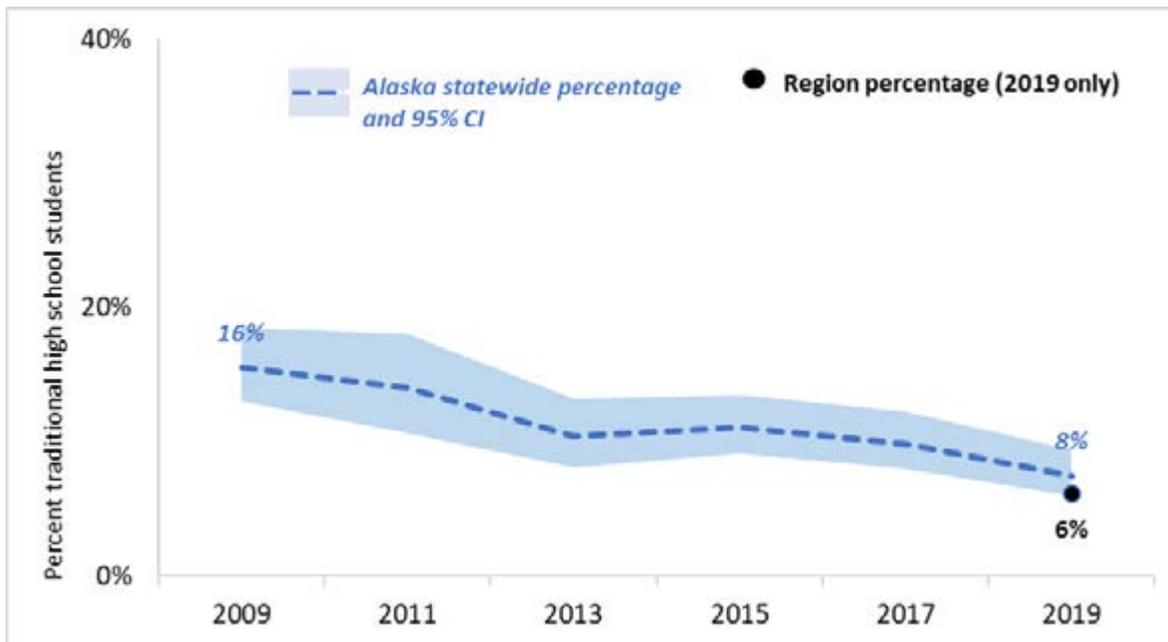
Source: AK YRBS 2019, all participating traditional high schools from the region

Within the Gulf Coast Region in 2019, e-cigarette use was not significantly different between groups of high school students:

- 25% among male students and 28% among female students
- 29% among Alaska Native students and 26% among non-Native students

## Cigarette smoking

**Figure 15:** The percentage of high school students who currently smoke cigarettes declined during the last 10 years in Alaska; the Gulf Coast Region was similar to the statewide percentage in 2019.

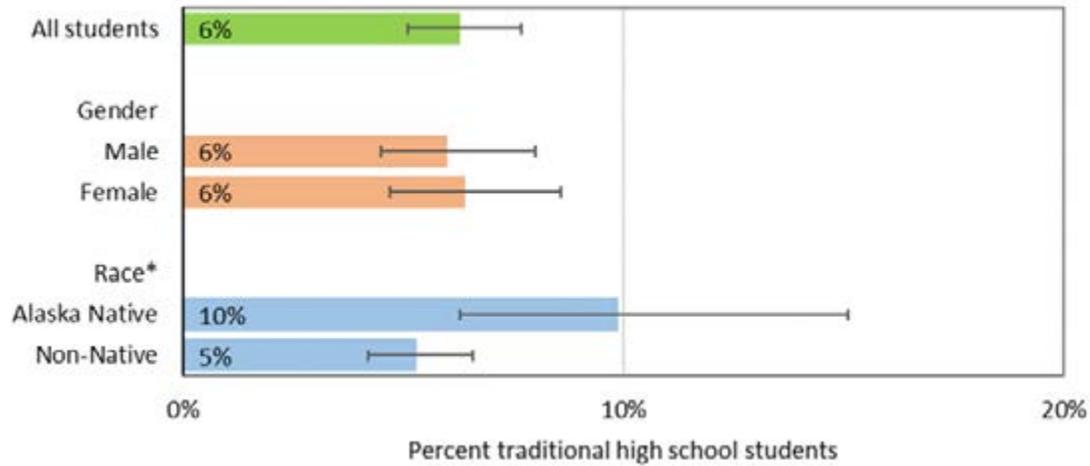


Year	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019
Alaska statewide	16%	14%	10%	11%	10%	8%
Gulf Coast Region	--	--	--	--	--	6%

Source: AK YRBS 2015-2019, Alaska state sample of traditional high schools; all participating traditional high schools from the region

- The percentage of high school students who smoked cigarettes statewide declined during the past ten years, from 16% in 2009 to 8% in 2019.
- In the Gulf Coast Region, 6% of students smoked cigarettes in 2019, which is not significantly different from the state percentage of 8%.
- Based on the most recent percentage of students who smoked cigarettes, there are more than 200 students in the Gulf Coast Region who are at risk of harming their health by smoking.

**Figure 16:** In the Gulf Coast Region, the percentage of high school students who currently smoke cigarettes varies by race.



\* Significant difference among subgroups

Source: AK YRBS 2019, all participating traditional high schools from the region

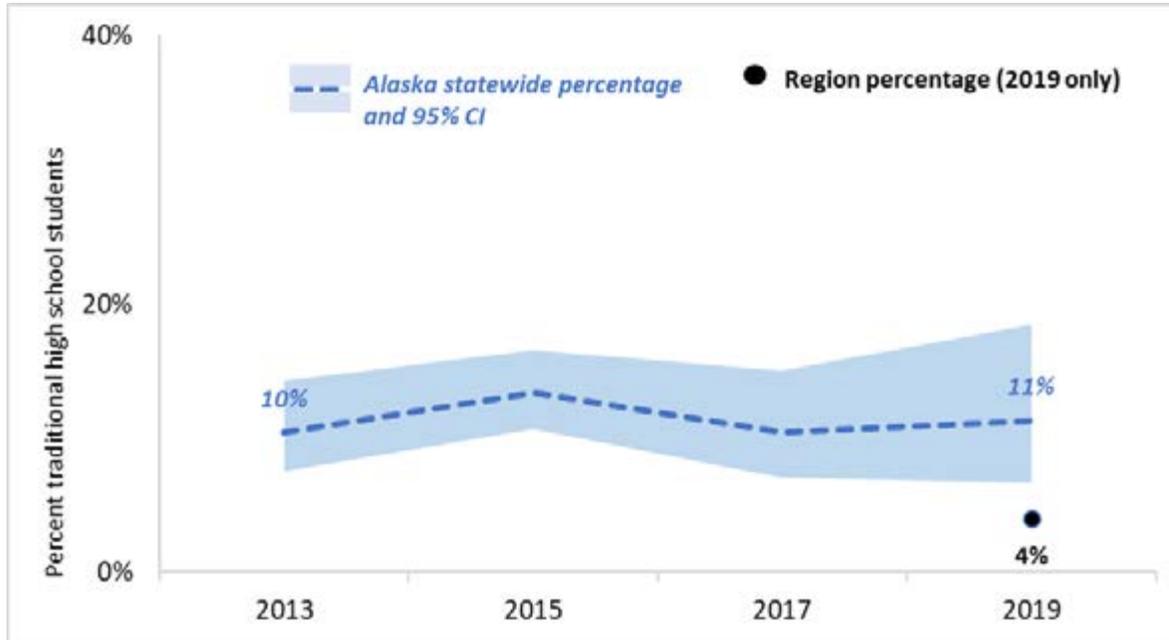
Within the Gulf Coast Region in 2019, the percentage of students who currently smoked cigarettes was:

- 6% among both male and female students
- Higher among Alaska Native students than non-Native students (10% vs. 5%)

## Smokeless tobacco use

Smokeless tobacco includes commercial products like chew, dip, snus, snuff, and dissolvable tobacco products. People in some regions of Alaska also use a unique traditional smokeless tobacco form called “iqmik” or “blackbull”, which is a mixture of tobacco leaf and punk ash.

**Figure 17:** The percentage of high school students who currently use smokeless tobacco remained stable during the last 7 years in Alaska; the Gulf Coast Region was lower than the statewide percentage in 2019.

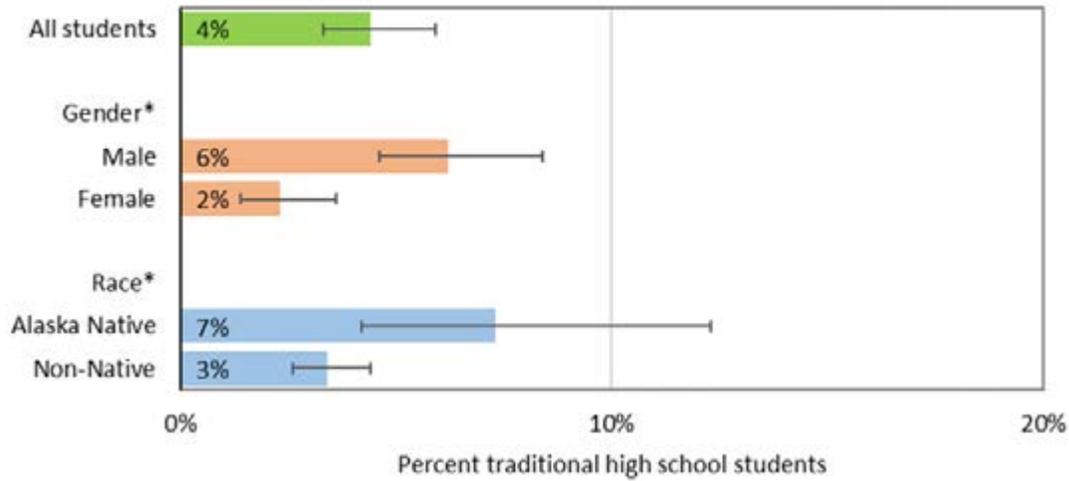


Year	2013	2015	2017	2019
Alaska statewide	10%	13%	10%	11%
Gulf Coast Region	--	--	--	4%

Source: AK YRBS 2015-2019, Alaska state sample of traditional high schools; all participating traditional high schools from the region

- Smokeless tobacco products include chew, dip, snuff, snus and iqmik. Data are shown from 2013 because this was the year iqmik was added to the questions about smokeless tobacco use.
- The percentage of high school students who used smokeless tobacco products remained stable statewide during the past seven years, from 10% in 2013 to 11% in 2019.
- In the Gulf Coast Region, 4% of students used smokeless tobacco in 2019, which was significantly lower than the statewide percentage of 11%.
- Based on the most recent percentage of students using smokeless tobacco, there are more than 200 students in the Gulf Coast Region who are at risk of harming their health by using smokeless tobacco.

**Figure 18:** In the Gulf Coast Region, the percentage of high school students who currently use smokeless tobacco varies by gender and race.



\* Significant difference among subgroups

Source: AK YRBS 2019, all participating traditional high schools from the region

Within the Gulf Coast Region in 2019, smokeless tobacco use among groups of high school students was:

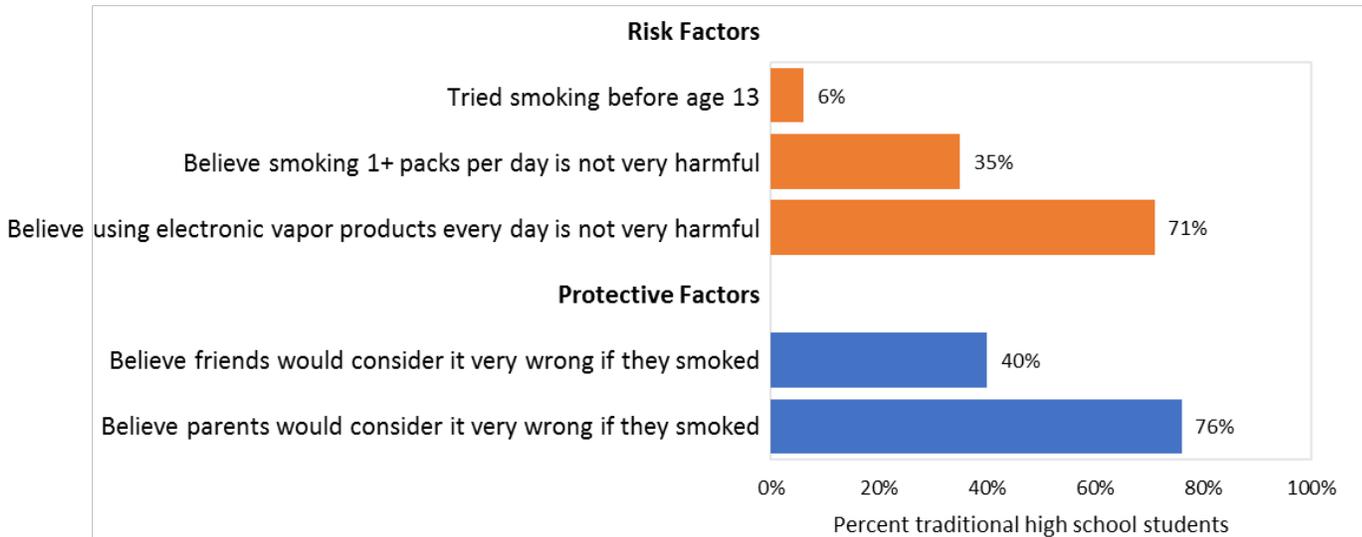
- Higher among male students than female students (6% vs. 2%)
- Higher among Alaska Native students than non-Native students (7% vs. 3%)

## Section 3. Preventing Youth Tobacco Use

### Risk and Protective Factors

*Risk factors* are measures associated with an increased potential that youth will use tobacco. *Protective factors* are measures associated with reduced potential that youth will use tobacco. Prevention programs are often designed to decrease risk factors and enhance protective factors.<sup>10</sup>

**Figure 19:** In the Gulf Coast Region, both risk and protective factors for tobacco use are relatively common among students.



Source: AK YRBS 2019, all participating traditional high schools from the region

Risk factors among Gulf Coast Region high school students include:

- 6% of Gulf Coast Region students said they first tried smoking a cigarette before the age of 13, which is not significantly different from the statewide (7%).
- 35% of the region's students think that smoking one or more packs per day poses no risk or only slight risk to their health. This is significantly lower than the statewide percentage of 43%.
- Most students (71%) think that using e-cigarettes every day is not very harmful, which is similar to statewide (73%).

Protective factors among Gulf Coast Region high school students include:

- Less than half of Gulf Coast Region students (40%) think their friends would consider it very wrong for them to smoke cigarettes. This is not significantly different from the statewide percentage of 46%.
- Most of the region's students (76%) reported that their parents would consider it very wrong for them to smoke cigarettes. This is similar to the statewide percentage of 77%.

<sup>10</sup> For more on risk and protective factors, see this U.S. interagency website on youth prevention <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/youth-mental-health/risk-and-protective-factors-youth>

## Youth Lifetime Tobacco Use

**Table 4:** Many high school students in the Gulf Coast Region have tried using tobacco products.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Gulf Coast Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
Ever tried vaping products	48%	46%
Ever tried cigarette smoking	28%	28%

Source: AK YRBS 2019, Alaska state sample of traditional high schools; all participating traditional high schools from the region

About half of high school students in the Gulf Coast Region have tried vaping products, and many have tried cigarette smoking. These findings are similar to statewide estimates.

- 48% of Gulf Coast Region students have tried using e-cigarettes at least once.
- 28% of the region’s students have tried smoking cigarettes at least once.

## Tobacco Taxes

Tobacco price increases, including taxes, are proven to reduce both adult and underage smoking; increasing the price of tobacco products is especially effective in preventing youth from starting to use them.<sup>11</sup>

Alaska’s statewide tobacco tax includes:

- \$2.00 for a pack of 20 cigarettes
- 75% of wholesale price of other tobacco products, including cigars and chewing tobacco.

There is currently no statewide tax on e-cigarettes products.

Municipalities and boroughs are also allowed to apply local taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco or nicotine products. Based on information available in May 2020:

- No local-level cigarette or other tobacco taxes have been passed in the Gulf Coast Region.

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<sup>11</sup> Community Guide to Preventive Services Task Force Tobacco Use: Interventions to Increase the Unit Price for Tobacco Products. Recommended (strong evidence), November 2012. <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/tobacco-use-interventions-increase-unit-price-tobacco>

## School Policies

Policies that restrict tobacco use on school properties have multiple benefits: they protect people from being exposed to secondhand smoke, limit student access to tobacco products and opportunities to use them, and restrict adult modeling and normalization of tobacco use.

Model policies restrict use of all types of tobacco or nicotine products, by all types of people – including students, staff, and visitors – on school grounds, and at school events held in other locations. Policies should be visibly promoted through signs, communications, and should provide supportive interventions for anyone who breaks the rules. Finally, there should be resources in place to ensure the rules are enforced.

### *Definitions of school policy ratings:*

- **Comprehensive policy** contains at least 90% of the model policy elements.
- **Strong policy** contains at least 80% of the model policy elements.
- **Fair policy** contains at least 70% of the model policy elements.
- **Incomplete policy** contains fewer than 70% of the model policy elements.

### **K-12 School district policies**

*Note: related information on adult attitudes about smoking and tobacco use on school property is included in Section 5 of this report, Table 11 and Table 12.*

**Table 5.** School districts in the Gulf Coast Region have established different policies about tobacco use.

<b>School district</b>	<b>Current policy status</b>	<b>K-12 enrollment</b>
Copper River School District	Comprehensive	455
Cordova City School District	Comprehensive	325
Kodiak Island Borough School District	Comprehensive	2,236
Chugach School District	Strong	478
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District	Strong	8,619
Valdez City School District	Fair	686

Source: ADAPT, May 2020.

Among the Gulf Coast Region’s six school districts, all six have adopted policies:

- Three have policies rated as comprehensive, closely mirroring the model policy.
- Two have strong policies, with many elements of the model policy in place.
- One has a fair policy, which lacks multiple elements of a model policy.

**Table 6:** In the Gulf Coast Region, few high school students use tobacco on school property.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Gulf Coast Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
<b>High school students who used tobacco on school property in past 30 days</b>		
Cigarettes	2%	2%
Smokeless tobacco (excluding iqmik)	2%	3%
Iqmik	1%	5%
Any: cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or iqmik	3%	8%

Source: AK YRBS 2019, all participating traditional high schools from the region  
 Percentages shown are among all traditional high school students.

Few high school students in the Gulf Coast Region said they used tobacco products on school property during the past 30 days.

- 2% of Gulf Coast Region students smoked cigarettes on school property, same as statewide.
- 2% of the region’s students used smokeless tobacco (excluding iqmik) on school property, similar to statewide.
- 1% of students used iqmik on school property, not significantly different from statewide.
- 3% of students used either cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or iqmik on school property, significantly lower than the statewide percentage of 8%.
- No information is currently available about student use of e-cigarettes on school property.

**Colleges, technical and vocational training schools**

In the Gulf Coast Region, three post-secondary institutions have adopted policies that restrict tobacco use on their campuses:

- Prince William Sound Community College has adopted a strong tobacco-free policy.
- Alaska Christian College has adopted a fair tobacco-free policy, which could be more effective if enforcement procedures were defined and if the sale, distribution, and promotion of tobacco on campus were explicitly prohibited.
- Alaska Bible College has an incomplete policy, missing key elements from the model policy such as specifying types of tobacco or nicotine products that are included, specifying that the policy applies to staff and visitors as well as students, and prohibiting smoking or tobacco use in all locations under the authority of the organization.

## Section 4. Helping People Quit

### Quitting Indicators

**Table 7:** In the Gulf Coast Region, many adults are trying to quit smoking.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Gulf Coast Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
<b>Quit attempts, among current smokers</b>		
Tried to quit in the past year	53%	55%
<b>Successful recent quitting, among people who smoked within the past year</b>		
Quit for 3+ months in the past year, at time of survey	4%	7%
<b>Successful long-term quitting, among people ages 25+ who were ever smokers</b>		
“Quit Ratio” – lifetime smokers who are now non-smokers	59%	59%

Source: AK BRFSS 2016-2018 combined file for quit attempts and quit ratio; supplemental file for recent quitting

Most adults in the Gulf Coast Region who ever started smoking have already quit, and most of those who still smoke are trying to quit.

- More than half of Gulf Coast Region adults who currently smoke cigarettes tried to quit in the past year, similar to statewide (53% and 55%).
- Among the region’s adults who smoked cigarettes within the past year, about 4% have quit successfully, significantly lower than statewide (7%).
- Among adults who have ever smoked, more than half have quit successfully for the long-term, the same as statewide (both 59%).

## Quitting resources

Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line provides quitting support including counseling and medication. All Alaska adults can get services all day, every day, by calling 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) or enrolling online at [alaskaquitline.com](http://alaskaquitline.com). Some communities and health systems also have programs to support quitting. For more information about regional resources, visit <http://alaskaquitline.com/resources-and-quit-materials/>.

**Table 8:** In the Gulf Coast Region, many adults have received advice and support to quit using tobacco.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Gulf Coast Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
<b>Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line (ATQL), among adult smokers</b>		
Current smokers who are aware of the ATQL	91%	86%
Number of people who received help from the ATQL in the past year	325	2,619
Estimated percentage of current adult smokers who called the ATQL in the past year**	2%	2%
<b>Healthcare Provider Support, among smokers who had a healthcare visit in past year</b>		
Advised to quit by a healthcare provider	66%	68%

\*\*Calculated as the number of people who received services, divided by the estimated number of adults who smoke cigarettes (population age 18 or older multiplied by the regional or state prevalence of cigarette smoking).

Source: Quitline awareness and advice are from AK BRFSS 2016-2018 supplemental file; quitline utilization and percent who called are from Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line Annual Report, FY2019 (July 2018-June 2019).

Resources are available to help people in the Gulf Coast Region quit smoking.

- Most adults in the Gulf Coast Region who smoke cigarettes are aware of Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line, not significantly different from statewide (91% and 86%).
- 325 of the region’s adults got help from Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line during the past year. This is 2% of the estimated number of adults who smoke in the region.
- About two-thirds of adult smokers who had a healthcare visit in the past year said that their healthcare provider advised them to quit, similar to statewide (66% and 68%).

## Section 5. Eliminating Exposure to Secondhand Smoke

### Secondhand Smoke Exposure

**Table 9:** In the Gulf Coast Region, some students and adults are still exposed to smoke from other people's smoked tobacco products (secondhand smoke, or SHS).

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Gulf Coast Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
<b>Youth Exposure</b>		
Students were in the same room with someone who was smoking in the past week	31%	27%
<b>Adult Exposure</b>		
Adult home SHS exposure, all adults	10%	7%
Adult home SHS exposure, among those who rent their home	15%	9%
Adults exposed to SHS at work, among adults who work**	12%	6%

Source: Youth measure from AK YRBS 2019; statewide percentages are from the state sample of traditional high schools, regional percentages are from all participating traditional high schools in the region. Adult measures from AK BRFSS supplemental file 2016-2018; questions on SHS were asked in 2016-17 only.

\*\*Alaska implemented a statewide clean indoor air law in 2018, and adult data reported here were collected prior to that law.

In the Gulf Coast Region, most adults reported no secondhand smoke exposure in homes and workplaces, however more youth reported exposure.

- 31% of Gulf Coast Region high school students were in the same room with someone who was smoking a tobacco product in the past week, significantly higher than the statewide percentage of 27%.
- 10% of Gulf Coast Region adults overall were exposed to secondhand smoke at home, which is significantly higher than the statewide percentage (7%). Among those who rent their home, 15% of adults were exposed, which is not significantly different from the statewide percentage (9%).
- Among the region's adults who work, 12% were exposed to secondhand smoke at work, which is significantly higher than the statewide percentage (6%).

### Secondhand Smoke Rules

**Table 10:** In the Gulf Coast Region, most adults are protected by rules to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke at home and at work.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Gulf Coast Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
<b>Home rules</b>		
Home smoking ban	91%	90%
Among those who rent, landlord has rules about smoking on the property	48%	50%
<b>Workplace rules</b>		
Smoking is not allowed in work areas, among adults who work indoors	84%	86%

Source: AK BRFSS supplemental file 2016-2018. Question about landlord rules not asked in 2017.

In the Gulf Coast Region, most private homes and workplaces have a smoking ban. These findings are not significantly different from those statewide.

- 91% of Gulf Coast Region adults said that smoking is not allowed inside their home.
- Among the region's adults who rent, about half said that their landlord has rules about smoking on the property (48%).
- Most adults who work indoors said that smoking was not allowed in their workplace (84%). Alaska's statewide law protecting indoor workers from secondhand smoke was implemented during July 2018,

and future survey reports should show closer to 100% of indoor workers reporting they are protected from secondhand smoke at work.

## Secondhand Smoke Attitudes

**Table 11:** In the Gulf Coast Region, most adults believe that secondhand smoke is harmful, and support rules that protect people from being exposed to secondhand smoke.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Gulf Coast Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
<b>Attitudes about harm</b>		
Agree secondhand smoke is very/somewhat harmful to people's health	91%	92%
Prefer to spend time where people are not smoking	88%	87%
Since bars went smokefree, have gone as often/more often than before	96%	94%
<b>Support rules that protect people from secondhand smoke</b>		
Agree/strongly agree people should be protected from secondhand smoke	87%	89%
Support smokefree restaurants	84%	84%
Support smokefree workplaces	83%	87%
<b>Agree tobacco use should not be allowed at schools</b>		
On school grounds during school hours	96%	94%
On school grounds after school hours	90%	89%
At school-sponsored events, including those not on school grounds	83%	81%
<b>Agree tobacco use should not be allowed in healthcare settings</b>		
On hospital grounds, such as on walkways and outside building entrances	85%	85%
On health clinic grounds, such as on walkways and outside building entrances	87%	87%

Source: AK BRFSS supplemental file 2016-2018.

In the Gulf Coast Region, most adults support rules that protect people from being exposed to secondhand smoke. Results are not significantly different from those statewide, except support for smokefree workplaces.

- Most adults in the Gulf Coast Region agree that secondhand smoke is harmful (91%). Most also prefer to spend time where people are not smoking (88%).
- 96% of the region's adults said they now go out to bars as often or more often than they did before Alaska's bars went smokefree.
- A majority of adults agree that people should be protected from secondhand smoke in general (87%), and most support smokefree restaurant (84%) and smokefree workplace rules (83%).
- Support for smokefree workplaces is significantly lower than statewide (83% vs. 87%, respectively).
- Nearly all adults say that tobacco use should not be allowed on school grounds during school hours (96%). Most also agree that tobacco use should not be allowed after school hours (90%) or at school-sponsored events, including those not on school grounds (83%).
- Most adults support rules that do not allow tobacco use on hospital grounds (85%) and health clinic grounds (87%).

## Secondhand Smoke Norms

“Norms” are values, beliefs, attitudes, and expectations for behavior that are shared by most people in a group, such as a community. The following are indicators of perceived pro- or anti-tobacco community norms.

**Table 12:** In the Gulf Coast Region, some adults report seeing smoking in school settings, and more report seeing it in healthcare settings.

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Gulf Coast Region</i>	<i>State of Alaska</i>
<b>Report seeing tobacco use in school settings</b> , among adults who have visited them		
Inside school but after school hours	4% §	3%
Outside on school grounds during school hours	16%	19%
Outside on school grounds after school hours	23%	26%
At school-sponsored events, including those not on school grounds	21%	22%
<b>Report seeing tobacco use in healthcare settings</b> , among adults who have visited them		
On hospital grounds	50%	57%
On health clinic grounds	36%	41%
<b>Aware of local tobacco prevention activities</b> , among adults		
Aware of a local group doing tobacco prevention in their community	56%	57%

§ Interpret this estimate with caution. See Appendix for additional detail.

Source: AK BRFSS 2016-2018 supplemental file.

In the Gulf Coast Region, despite strong support for rules restricting smoking and protecting people from secondhand smoke (see prior section), many people still report seeing tobacco use in school and healthcare settings. Results are not significantly different from those seen statewide.

- Relatively few Gulf Coast Region adults have seen someone using tobacco inside schools (4%). Somewhat more have seen tobacco use outside on school grounds during school hours (16%), outside on school grounds but after school hours (23%), or at school-sponsored events including those not on school grounds (21%).
- Half of the region’s adults who visited a hospital in the past year have seen someone using tobacco there (50%), and over a third have seen tobacco use on health clinic grounds (36%). Seeing tobacco use on Gulf Coast Region health clinic grounds is significantly lower than statewide (36% vs. 41%).
- More than half of adults said they know about a local group working on tobacco prevention in their community (56%).

## Secondhand Smoke Policies

Alaska has a statewide law that bans smoking and use of electronic vaping products (“e-cigarettes”) in enclosed public places and workplaces, including buses and taxis, stores, bars, and restaurants (Alaska Statute 18.35.301, enacted July 17, 2018). Tribal governments, local municipalities, and organizations can pass policies that build on this statewide law, but cannot remove or weaken the state law.

The Alaska TPC Program collects information on a variety of local smokefree policies, including tribal resolutions, community ordinances, multi-unit housing policies, and healthcare policies.<sup>12</sup> Each of these policies are evaluated in comparison to a relevant model policy, scored based on how many model policy elements are included, and categorized as defined below.

### *Policy Strength Definitions:*

- **Comprehensive policy** contains at least 90% of the model policy elements.
- **Strong policy** contains at least 80% of the model policy elements.
- **Fair policy** contains at least 70% of the model policy elements.
- **Incomplete policy** contains fewer than 70% of the model policy elements.

### **Tribal Resolutions**

There are about 30 tribes in the Gulf Coast Region. As of May 2020, 18 tribes have tobacco-free or smokefree tribal resolutions on record. This is more than half of the tribes in the region.

- 17 are tobacco-free policies.
- One is a smokefree policy.
- Nine of these policies include e-cigarettes.

### **Multi-Unit Housing Policies**

Policies that ban smoking in multi-unit housing, such as apartment buildings, duplexes, and public housing complexes, can protect families from secondhand smoke exposure within their homes, “drift” between units, and smoke residue left by former residents.

Model housing policies include:

- Prohibitions on all types of smoking and tobacco use, including e-cigarettes and marijuana, within indoor spaces and all outdoor spaces of the property
- Specific definition for “residents” that includes anyone living or staying in the property
- Statement that the policy applies to all current and new residents, guests, visitors, employees, contractors, volunteers, and vendors
- Requirement for posting “no smoking” signs, and for management to communicate the policy to employees and residents
- Inclusion of the policy within lease agreements
- Statement of penalties for violations

Based on information available in ADAPT during May 2020, four multi-unit housing properties in the Gulf Coast Region have smokefree addendums or policies in their leases:

- The Kodiak Island Housing Authority Heritage Heights policy is rated as fair, missing some key elements of the model policy.

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<sup>12</sup> Information about tobacco-related policies can be shared by emailing [tobacco@alaska.gov](mailto:tobacco@alaska.gov)

- North Pacific Rim Housing Authority, Kodiak Island Housing Authority Emerald Heights, and Life Builders policies are rated as incomplete because they lack definitions, specificity, “no smoking” signage, and/or enforcement.

**Healthcare Policies**

Healthcare facilities exist to promote the health and wellbeing of the communities they serve. Policies that restrict smoking on healthcare campuses can protect people from exposure, including those who are vulnerable due to medical conditions.

Model healthcare policies include:

- Prohibiting all types of tobacco use, including e-cigarettes in all organization-controlled indoor and outdoor spaces, parking lots, vehicles, and sidewalks, by all employees, clients, patients, visitors, and vendors
- Prohibiting the sale, advertising, and transportation of tobacco products on organization-controlled properties and vehicles
- Requirements to post the policies
- Definitions of policy violations, clear penalties relevant to the individual (e.g., visitors, employees), and procedures for enforcement
- Identification of resources to help with quitting tobacco available to employees, patients, visitors, and vendors

**Table 13:** In the Gulf Coast Region, some healthcare facilities have policies to limit tobacco use on their campuses.

<b>Healthcare Facility</b>	<b>Current Policy Status</b>
Copper River Native Association	Strong
Cross Road Medical Center	Strong
Kodiak Area Native Association	Strong
Seldovia Village Tribe	Fair
Dena’ina Wellness Center	Incomplete
Providence Valdez Medical Center	Incomplete

Source: ADAPT, May 2020.

In the Gulf Coast region, six healthcare facilities have adopted policies.

- Three are strong tobacco-free policies.
- One policy is rated as fair.
- Two policies are incomplete, meaning they lack key elements that are considered essential for effective policies.