

ALASKA TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAM



Helping Alaska adults and youth live tobacco-free lives

FY2021 ANNUAL REPORT

BUILDING A HEALTHIER ALASKA TOGETHER

“While Alaska has made great strides in tobacco prevention, and thousands of lives have been saved, there is still much work to do.”

— MARGE STONEKING, FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION ALASKA

Health begins in the places we live, learn, work and play. It starts with our families, communities and the places we spend time, like school, work, and parks. Tobacco remains the leading preventable cause of death and disease in Alaska.¹ We know that tobacco continues to exert a heavy cost in terms of lives and dollars.

THE HIGH COST OF TOBACCO USE IN THE UNITED STATES



**OVER 300
BILLION
ANNUAL COST OF
SMOKING-RELATED
DISEASE AND DEATH**

- Over \$300 billion annual cost of smoking-related disease, disability, and death
- More than \$156 billion cost associated with premature death and exposure to secondhand smoke
- About \$117 billion annual cost from respiratory conditions in children 0-4 years old from indoor smoking¹

IN ALASKA

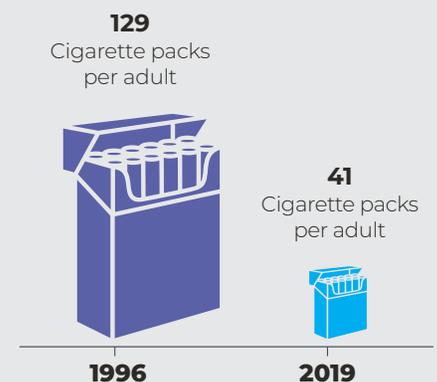
Looking at Medicaid data can help us understand the high cost of tobacco in Alaska. As of May 2021, Medicaid and Denali Kid Care covered around 250,000 (about 1 out of 3*) people in Alaska.^{2,3} Every year, about \$192 million is spent for Medicaid beneficiaries who use tobacco.⁴ This is a vast underestimation of tobacco-related costs in Alaska as it does not include costs from people covered outside of Medicaid, lost productivity due to tobacco-related death or disease, or lives lost from tobacco-related causes.

The Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program (TPC) is committed to reducing disease and death from tobacco in all communities. We support communities across Alaska working to increase the number of people who quit using tobacco, prevent people from becoming addicted in the first place and protect the public from exposure to secondhand smoke. This support save lives and money.⁵

Evidence-based tobacco control strategies implemented over time by Alaska’s state, tribal, regional, and community organizations have helped reduce cigarette smoking in Alaska adults over time.⁶

*Calculated by dividing the number of people covered by Medicaid/CHIP in Alaska in May 2021 (250,000)² by the Alaska Census July 2021 population estimate (732,673)³

The number of cigarette packs bought has decreased over time ⁶



HOW ALASKA'S TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAM IS FUNDED

As per Alaska Statute (AS) 37.05.58010⁷ and AS 44.29.02011,⁸ the Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program is funded through several sources including:

- 20% of the Master Settlement Agreement;⁹
- 8.9% Additional Cigarette tax (AS 43.50.190(a)(3));⁴
- Federal Grant funds⁴

Alaska Statute 44.29.02011 identifies the required activities for these state funds, which include each of the CDC-recommended components for a comprehensive tobacco prevention and control program, including a tobacco enforcement program.



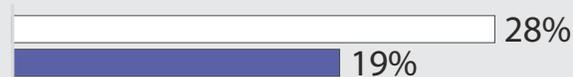
RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Smoking rates in Alaska have declined over time ⁶



All Alaska Adults

□ 1996 ■ 2019



The more we invest in tobacco prevention and control efforts, the stronger our impact on reducing health harms and saving lives.¹

TPC funding supports these efforts, but we must do more. The [tobacco industry spends over \\$16 million every year promoting its products in our state](#). Addressing rising rates of youth e-cigarette use will also require a strong effort with evidence-based strategies to counter misleading and targeted marketing of new and emerging products.

For the biggest return on investments, comprehensive tobacco programs:

1. Reduce the number of people starting to use tobacco products and



2. Increase the number of people who quit these products over time.

COMPREHENSIVE TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAMS WORK

The Alaska TPC model is grounded in CDC best practices for comprehensive tobacco control programs:



2. Smokefree policies

Most Alaska adults agree that people should be protected from secondhand smoke.⁶ In 2018, Alaska passed **Alaska's Smokefree Workplace Law**, which protects the rights of workers to breathe clean air in their workspaces.

4. Access to quit support

Most Alaska adults who smoke (about 3 out of 5) want to quit.⁶ The TPC Program fully funds Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line to provide no-cost quit support to enrollees, including coaching and nicotine-replacement therapies regardless of insurance status.

1. Tobacco price increases

Alaska increased tobacco product prices in 1997 and 2004, leading to lower levels of use by youth and adults.⁶ Increasing tobacco prices, for example, through taxes, is one effective strategy for decreasing tobacco use, especially to reduce youth initiation.¹

3. Education campaigns

The TPC Program runs year-round public education campaigns. These campaigns share resources and information on the health harms of smoking, promote quitting and prevent initiation of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.

5. Restrictions on advertising

Point of sale advertising policies, like restricting colorful ads at eye level, help reduce marketing to youth and are effective prevention strategies.¹ The TPC Program funds community organizations to engage youth in these types of strategies.

TOBACCO POLICIES AND PROGRAMS WORK TO REDUCE TOBACCO USE OVER TIME⁶



19%

of Alaska adults smoked in 2019, down from 28% in 1996



69%

reduction in annual cigarette packs sold per adult (41.4 packs in 2019 compared to 128.6 in 1996) - or 615 million fewer cigarettes sold in 2019



8%

of Alaska youth smoked in 2019, down from 37% in 1995



28%

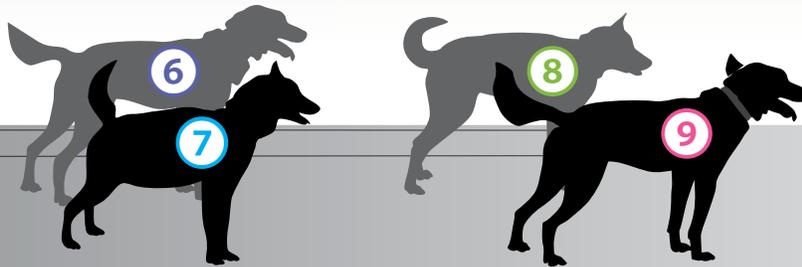
of Alaska youth ever tried smoking (even a puff) in 2019, down from 72% in 1995

6. Availability

In 2019, Alaska added restrictions on selling e-cigarettes and products containing nicotine to youth. This change meant reduced availability of nicotine products to young people.¹¹

8. Age of sale

Increasing the minimum sales age prevents and delays tobacco use by young people.¹ In 2018, [Sitka was the first community in Alaska](#) to raise the minimum legal sales age for tobacco products to 21. At the end of 2019, [the federal minimum age for sale of tobacco products was raised to 21](#), also called “Tobacco 21” or “T21.”



7. Retail licensure

Licensing retailers is an evidence-based tobacco control measure to reduce tobacco use, especially in youth.¹ Knowing where tobacco retailers are located supports enforcement of tobacco control laws, including sales to youth.¹² Alaska has a comprehensive statewide tobacco retail license requirement covering stores that sell tobacco products, e-cigarettes, and nicotine products.¹³

9. Pricing & promotion

In 2009, the [Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act](#) made it harder for tobacco companies to advertise and sell tobacco products to youth. The law included banning flavored cigarettes, requiring warning labels, and allowing states to require tobacco products in stores be placed out of sight.¹⁴

T21 PREVENTS AND DELAYS TOBACCO USE BY YOUNG PEOPLE

What is T21?

In 2019, the federal minimum age for sale of tobacco products was raised to 21. This federal law applies to all businesses and people across the United States.

Why is it important?

Since 2013, youth cigarette smoking rates are no longer declining significantly. In addition, youth e-cigarette use has been rapidly rising in the past couple years.⁶

Is it effective?

Raising the minimum age to 21 reduces initiation among teens by about 25% and young adults by 15%. In addition, by the time today's teenagers become adults, it would decrease national use of tobacco by about 12%.¹⁵



ADAPTING TOBACCO CONTROL DURING A PANDEMIC

Despite the difficult circumstances many people in Alaska have faced, tobacco prevention and control initiatives continue to advance. The pandemic has made us understand as never before the importance of health in our lives. We know that people who smoke have increased chances of severe disease and death from COVID-19 compared to people who do not smoke.¹⁶ Getting support to people who want to quit and sharing resources and information has never been more important.

Organizations receiving TPC Program funding for community and regional work in tobacco are making progress and have adapted innovative methods to continue to reach community members.

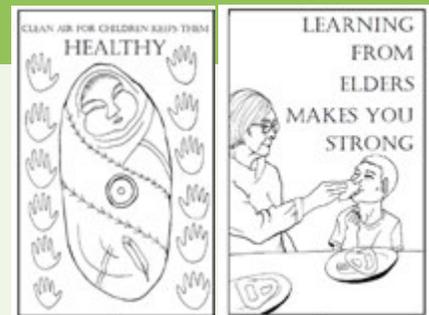
2021 YOUTH ENCOURAGING ALASKANS' HEALTH (YEAH) SUMMIT

The TPC Program provides funding and technical assistance to the Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP) to support youth engagement in tobacco control initiatives statewide. For the past three years, RurAL CAP has hosted a teen-led Youth Encouraging Alaskans' Health (YEAH) Summit, which encourages young people to live a tobacco-free life. The past two years, the YEAH Summit was held virtually with young people attending from various communities across Alaska.



NEW TOOL TO TEACH YOUTH ABOUT TOBACCO PREVENTION

Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation created a coloring book in May 2020 to connect health education about tobacco and Alaska Native values. These coloring books — for youth from kindergarten through 12th grade — were printed and given to the local Alaska 4-H Program to include in their virtual culture camp packets.



ORGANIZATIONS HOST GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT (GASO) ACTIVITIES ACROSS ALASKA

In November 2020, many organizations receiving TPC funding hosted virtual events to celebrate the GASO, which provided an opportunity to encourage Alaskans to make a plan to quit using tobacco.



Gulf Coast Region Hosts Virtual GASO Event

Tobacco staff from Chugachmiut, Copper River Native Association, Kodiak Area Native Association, the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, American Lung Association, and the State of Alaska TPC Program joined together to share information and resources about quit resources in Alaska and how to make a quit plan, and more.

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) Celebrates GASO on Facebook

ANTHC staff shared resources for cessation, former tobacco user testimonies, along with games and chances to win prizes, hosted on their Facebook page.



QUITTING NICOTINE FOR GOOD

All tobacco products and most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is a highly addictive chemical.¹⁷ Research shows that access to counseling and nicotine replacement therapy increases the chances of a successful quit.¹⁸



SUPPORTING ALASKANS TRYING TO QUIT FOR GOOD

Most people in Alaska who smoke want to quit.⁶

Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line, which is fully funded by the TPC Program, offers personalized support to help people quit smoking, vaping, and chewing.

Below is a sampling of experiences from people who used Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line:

"It was the positivity and understanding about how everyone's quit journey is different that really helped me."

"Coaches were very understanding and did a wonderful job explaining how to use quit aids and it's working great, thank you!"

Alaska's Quit Line Can Be Reached Many Ways

Phone



Online



Text2Enroll



Provider referral



There are additional programs to support people who are trying to quit while pregnant and those experiencing mental health conditions.

ENHANCED QUIT LINE PROGRAMS

Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line offers tailored programs to reach priority populations, like pregnant and breastfeeding women and people experiencing behavioral conditions. Behavioral health conditions are conditions that affect a person's thinking, feeling, behavior or mood.



Pregnancy

- Additional calls with coaches during pregnancy and after the baby is born
- Specialized team of coaches
- Coordinated treatment with healthcare team



Behavioral Health

- Stress management
- Unlimited phone support
- Additional nicotine replacement therapy
- Coordinated treatment with behavioral health care team

789

people with a behavioral health condition called Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line last fiscal year



Source: Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control, Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line Program records July 2020 - June 2021; Available upon request.

COMPREHENSIVE TOBACCO PROGRAMS DRIVE RESULTS



New Alaska Tobacco Price Increase

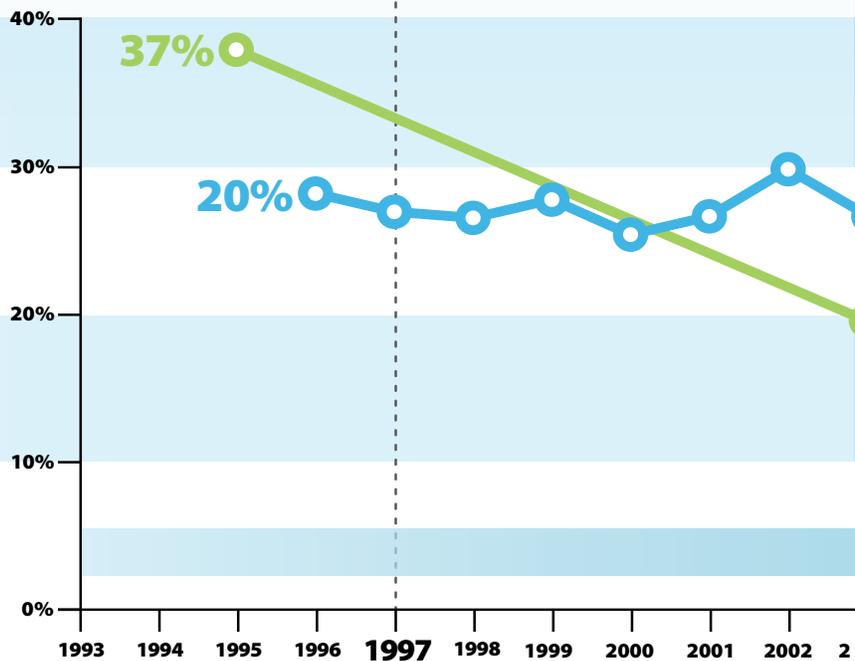
- not including e-cigarettes -
\$1 per cigarette pack
75% wholesale other tobacco products.



Tobacco Prevalence: Percentage of Alaska People who Smoke/Vape by Year

- Alaska adults who smoke
- Alaska high school students who smoke
- Alaska high school students who vape

Comprehensive tobacco control policies help reduce tobacco and e-cigarette use among adults and youth.



CDC gave funds to Alaska for Tobacco Prevention and Control efforts.

Alaska joins the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement (MSA), and raised tobacco sale age to those over 19.

Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line established.



CDC released minimum funding recommendations for state tobacco control programs; Alaska Legislature allocates MSA funds for tobacco control efforts in Alaska.

*E-cigarettes first became available in US stores in 2007. With the rapid rise in youth use of e-cigarettes, Alaska has been applying tobacco control policies that have worked over time to reduce tobacco use to promote quitting and prevent initiation of new and emerging tobacco products like e-cigarettes.



Alaska passed Alaska's Smokefree Workplace Law, including e-cigarettes, to protect clean air in enclosed public places and workplaces.



Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) passes resolution supporting smokefree workplaces statewide.

Sitka was the first community in Alaska to raise the minimum legal sales age of tobacco products to 21.

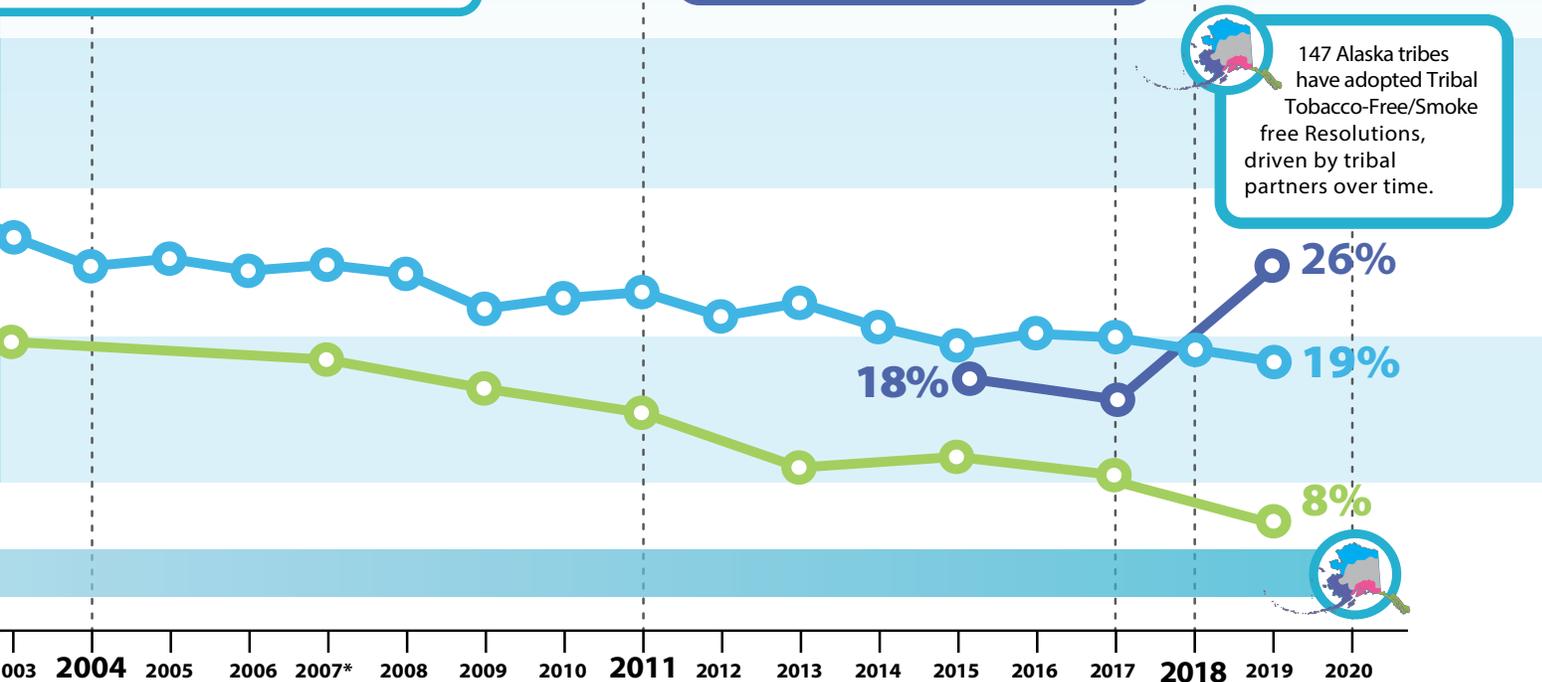


TPC Program launches e-cigarette public education campaign.

Increased Alaska Tobacco Prices - not including e-cigarettes - Tobacco tax increased to \$2 per pack over 3-year period.



147 Alaska tribes have adopted Tribal Tobacco-Free/Smoke free Resolutions, driven by tribal partners over time.



The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act granted FDA authority to regulate tobacco products and FDA banned cigarette flavors other than menthol.

FDA prohibited tobacco brand sponsorship of events.

Alaska passed the Alaska Business License Act, creating infrastructure to regulate the sale of tobacco products through business licensing.

Alaska updated [state youth access law](#) to include e-cigarettes and products containing nicotine.

Anchorage also raised the age to buy tobacco products to 21.

Federal law raised the age of tobacco sales to 21 across the country.

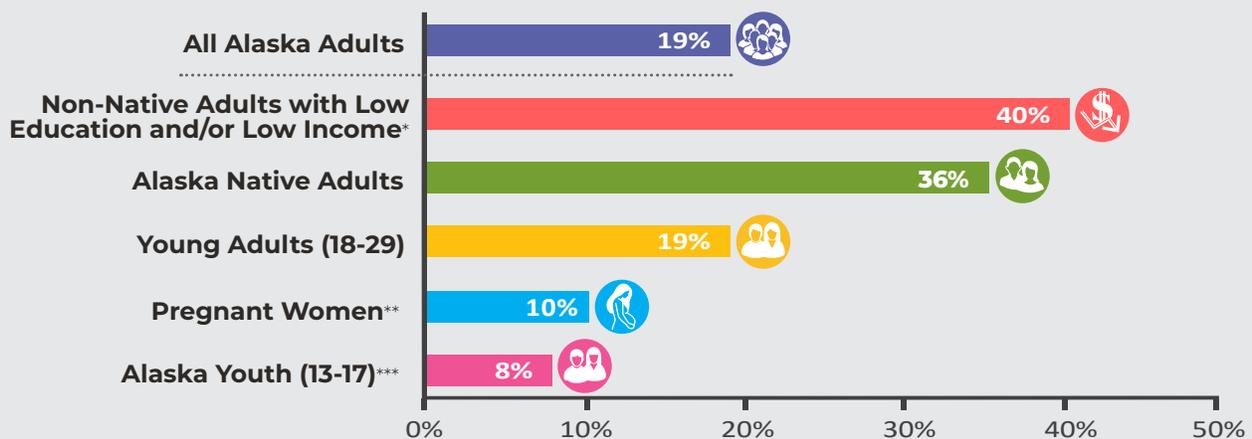
Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey began tracking data on high school student use of e-cigarettes.

REACHING PRIORITY POPULATIONS

Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line is committed to addressing the needs of people with increased chances of tobacco-related disease and death.

About half of Alaska Native adults in Alaska use some form of tobacco.⁶ Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line collaborates with tribal organizations, communities, and healthcare providers across Alaska to make sure Alaska Native people are getting the individualized support they need to quit. Quit Line programs, like free nicotine replacement therapy and coaching, complement local treatment options, tribal programs, and insurance coverage.

Percentage of Alaska Priority Populations Who Smoke

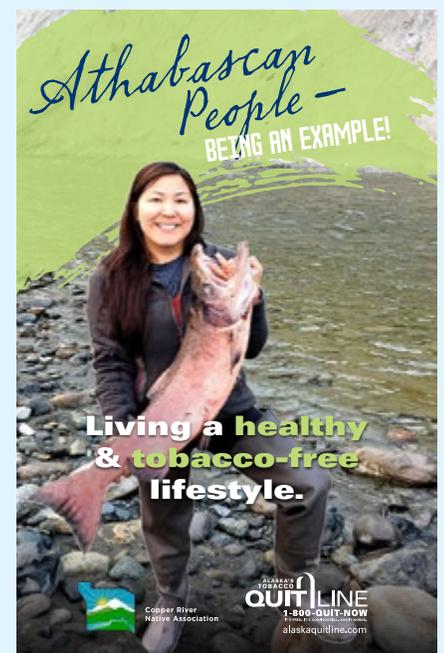


Source: Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2019, unless noted. * Non-Native adults, age 25-64, who have less than a high school education or whose household income is less than 185% of the federal poverty level. ** PRAMS, 2019, Maternal smoking in the last 3 months of pregnancy. *** Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019.

COPPER RIVER NATIVE ASSOCIATION CONNECTS QUIT LINE AND COMMUNITY

There can be many barriers to calling a Quit Line, but community organizations and healthcare providers play a critical role connecting people to the free service.¹⁹ Copper River Native Association's (CRNA) tobacco outreach coordinator, Sheila Hurst, supports community members trying to quit using tobacco by sitting down with them and calling Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line together.

"We planned together a time for community members to come to my office and make that call together," said Sheila Hurst, CRNA Tobacco Outreach Coordinator. "There was one time we had one of our community members nicotine replacement therapies sent to our clinic, since he didn't have a mailbox. This one extra step has helped some of our community members quit."



PROTECTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN ALASKA

“Because most tobacco use is established during adolescence, actions to prevent our nation’s youth from the potential of a lifetime of nicotine addiction are critical.”

— THOMAS R. FRIEDEN, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, 2009-2017

Over time, smoking traditional cigarettes has declined among Alaska high school students, but many youth and young adults are still using tobacco and use of e-cigarette products has skyrocketed.²⁰

We know that young people who smoke e-cigarettes are more likely to smoke traditional cigarettes in the future.²⁰ E-cigarettes, like vapes, puff bars, and pods, contain ultra-fine particles and create an aerosol that is inhaled deep into the lungs. These products contain harmful cancer-causing chemicals and toxic metals like nickel, tin and lead. In addition to toxic metals and chemicals, most e-cigarettes (99%) contain nicotine, which is harmful in any form for young people.²¹ Nicotine is highly addictive, harms brain development, and affects attention, memory, mood, the ability to learn, and impulse control.²²

Prevention efforts in youth and young adults are critical. Most people who smoke (9 out of 10) first try cigarettes before the age of 18.²³



BEST PRACTICES IN ALASKA

New Alaska vaping education campaign launched for parents, caregivers, and teens

To combat the vaping epidemic in Alaska, the TPC Program launched an e-cigarette education campaign in July of 2020 to provide information about the types of e-cigarette products, explain dangers of nicotine on the developing brain, and share resources like the AK Live Vape Free Program, which offers support to parents, caregivers, and teenagers.

AK Live Vape Free



Texting support for teens

For teens ages 13-17, the TPC Program added the Live Vape Free teen texting program in July 2021 to help teens learn about vaping, get support to quit, and find information and resources.



Online course for caregivers

The Live Vape Free online program helps caregivers and adults identify signs of vaping, support a teen to quit, and learn how to talk about vaping with teens with various resources, including:

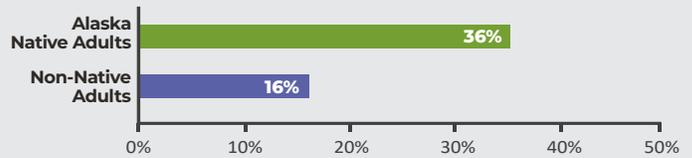
- a self-paced online course,
- chatting with a live coach for support, and
- an online resource library.

HEALTH EQUITY

WHY TOBACCO DISPARITIES EXIST

Many historical and contemporary injustices make it harder for people of some communities to live tobacco-free lives. For example, the tobacco industry targeted Alaska Native people for years with advertising campaigns, sponsorships, and promotions.²⁴ Systems, policies, and discrimination over time have also led to tobacco-related health disparities in Alaska Native communities.²⁵

In 2019 36% of Alaska Native adults smoked cigarettes compared to 16% of non-Native adults⁶



SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES AROUND ALASKA

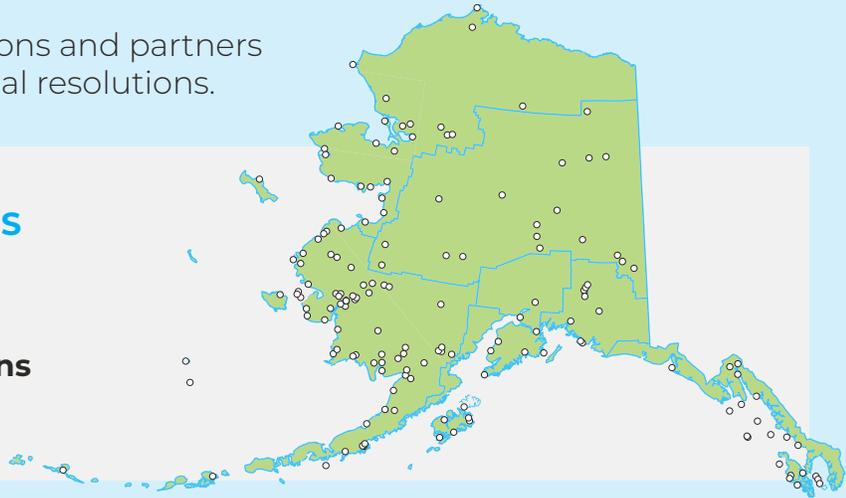
Alaska Native communities are vastly diverse and range geographically from the Tlingit in the Southeast to the Iñupiat in the North. While the number of Alaska Native people who use tobacco has decreased over time thanks to comprehensive tobacco control policies, tobacco-free tribal resolutions, public education campaigns, and access to quit support, there is still much work to be done to eliminate health disparities in our state.

PARTNERING WITH TRIBES FOR A HEALTHIER TOMORROW

Many tribes, community organizations and partners worked toward tobacco-free tribal resolutions.

TOBACCO PREVENTION POLICIES IN ALASKA

As of 2020, there were 147 Tribal Tobacco-Free/Smoke-free Resolutions (out of 229 tribes).²⁶



PARTNERSHIPS SUPPORT ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN QUITTING TOBACCO

Evidence shows that Alaska Native women have higher tobacco use before, during, and after pregnancy than their non-Native Alaska women counterparts.^{27,28} The Tobacco Prevention Control (TPC) Program and ANTHC worked together on a statewide effort to increase tobacco education, screenings, referrals, and linkages to prenatal treatment for Alaska Native women. ANTHC offers a prenatal tobacco prevention and treatment program, where pregnant mothers are provided culturally relevant education and support for tobacco use and quitting. ANTHC refers pregnant mothers to local providers and Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line.

PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS ALASKA

“Tobacco use continues to cause high levels of death and disease across Alaska and is the leading cause of preventable death among Alaska Native people. Leveraging state and tribal resources across Alaska and working together means we can offer more services and support all Alaskans who are trying to live tobacco-free lives.”

— CRYSTAL MEADE, PROGRAM MANAGER FOR ANTHC TOBACCO PREVENTION PROGRAM

The TPC Program collaborates with organizations through community-based grants, partnerships and technical assistance across the state to:

1. Prevent youth from starting to use tobacco
2. Protect the public from secondhand smoke
3. Promote quitting among youth and adults
4. Identify and eliminate tobacco-related health disparities

COPPER RIVER NATIVE ASSOCIATION USES CULTURE TO STRENGTHEN RESILIENCY AGAINST ADDICTION



In June 2020, with the support of RurAL CAP, the Copper River Native Association Youth Employment and Training Initiative talked about the dangers of tobacco, vaping and nicotine with program participants using interactive leadership activities that build resiliency and connection to culture.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM (SEARHC) INVOLVES FAMILIES AND YOUTH IN TOBACCO WORK

In May 2021, the SEARHC Tobacco Program partnered with Evergreen Elementary school and the local police department to pick up cigarette butts and other trash around downtown Wrangell. The students collected over 1,500 cigarette butts while learning about the harm of cigarettes to their health.



PROMOTING ALTERNATIVE-TO-SUSPENSION MODELS IN ALASKA HIGH SCHOOLS

During the 2018-19 school year, there were 781 school suspensions for tobacco product use, including e-cigarettes, which led to more than 1,800 missed school days in Alaska high schools.²⁹ The TPC Program works with the American Lung Association to promote alternative-to-suspension programs, like INDEPTH, to schools and organizations working with youth.



EMERGING TRENDS AND EVOLVING RESPONSES

“There is no substitute for clean air.”

— CHRISTY KNIGHT, TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAM MANAGER

Ventilation is NOT the Same as Smokefree



In 2006, the Surgeon General reported, “Eliminating smoking in indoor spaces fully protects nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke. Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air and ventilating buildings cannot eliminate exposures of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke.” The American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers, which develops standards for building ventilation systems, similarly reported that ventilation and air-cleaning technologies cannot control the risks of indoor environmental tobacco smoke exposure, and that the only effective way to eliminate those risks is to ban smoking.³⁰

Most Alaska adults agree that people should be protected from

Secondhand smoke⁶



Secondhand marijuana smoke



Secondhand marijuana smoke contains many of the same toxic and cancer-causing chemicals found in tobacco smoke. It also contains the compound tetrahydrocannabinol, also known as THC, which can be passed to others, including infants and children, through secondhand smoke.³¹

While there is a lot to still be learned about secondhand marijuana smoke, every Alaskan has the right to breathe clean air.

Communities Protect Their Marijuana Retail Workers from Secondhand Smoke

Alaska’s Smokefree Workplace Law includes protection from secondhand smoke from marijuana, unless a licensed marijuana retail store holds a valid on-site consumption endorsement approved by the Marijuana Control Board, and on-site consumption is not prohibited by a local option. Some communities, such as [Anchorage](#), [Juneau](#), and [Homer](#) have upheld comprehensive smoke free workplace laws and protect against consumption of combustible marijuana products inside licensed marijuana retailers. To protect workers and meet regulations for on-site consumption, [Juneau passed safe outdoor on-site consumption policies](#) that still protects the right of their employees to breathe clean air.

A Changing Industry

The dramatic rise in electronic cigarette use, especially by young people, is a significant health concern. The tobacco industry is constantly evolving with products in different shapes, forms, and methods of use that deliver high amounts of tobacco, nicotine, or synthetic nicotine. Many of these products, especially with flavors and colorful packaging, are appealing to youth. Health and science experts are concerned that these new and emerging products may play a role in addiction, particularly in young people, and the long-term health effects remain unclear. The TPC Program remains committed to a tobacco-free Alaskan future while ensuring the next generation of Alaska youth are not addicted to new and emerging products.

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WORKING TOGETHER FOR A TOBACCO-FREE ALASKA

The Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program funds community organizations across the state to tailor proven tobacco control interventions for communities. TPC also partners with non-funded organizations to leverage resources and reach all Alaskans with health education. Those organizations include: Breathe Free Alaska Coalition, Breathe Free Anchorage, Breathe Free Mat-Su, Partnership for Tobacco-Free Southeast, TIN Gulf Coast Coalition, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Heart Association and AARP.



Key Tobacco Prevention Partners Across Alaska

NORTHERN



INTERIOR



SOUTHCENTRAL



SOUTHWEST



SOUTHEAST



STATEWIDE



State of Alaska
Michael J. Dunleavy, Governor

Department of Health and Social Services
Adam Crum, MSPH, Commissioner
Anne Zink, MD, FACEP, Chief Medical Officer

Division of Public Health
Heidi Hedberg, Director



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