

# Alaska Health Status Indicators

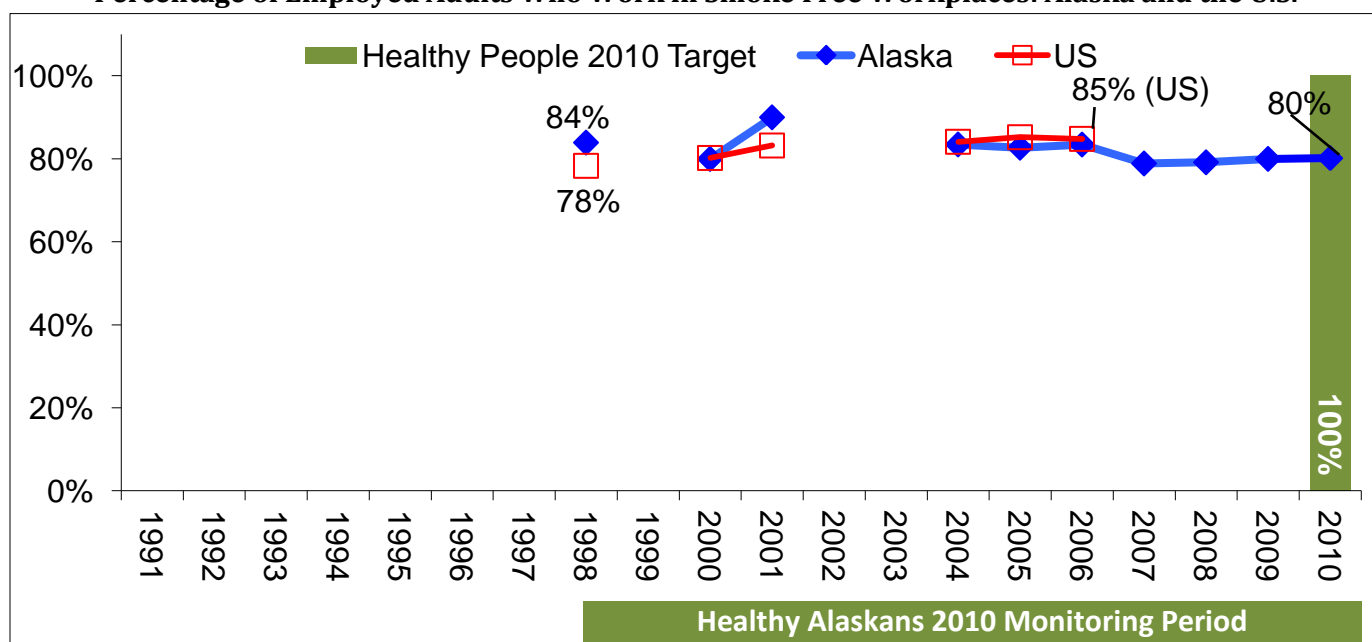
## Indicator: *Adults Exposed to Secondhand Smoke at Work*

### Why is this important?

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States.<sup>1</sup> There have been over 12 million tobacco-related deaths in the United States since the landmark 1964 Surgeon General's report, which broadcast that smoking was a cause of cancer.<sup>2</sup> And smoking kills more than just those who choose to smoke. Exposure to secondhand smoke kills approximately 50,000 Americans every year.<sup>3</sup> Tobacco smoke contains hundreds of toxic chemicals, including at least 69 known carcinogens.<sup>4</sup> Secondhand smoke causes lung cancer and heart disease in adults as well as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and acute respiratory infections among children.<sup>5</sup> Any exposure to secondhand smoke presents a health risk; eliminating smoking in indoor spaces is the only approach that protects nonsmokers from secondhand smoke exposure.<sup>5</sup>

### How are we doing?

Percentage of Employed Adults Who Work in Smoke Free Workplaces: Alaska and the U.S.



The percentage of adult Alaskans who work in workplaces with policies prohibiting smoking was relatively stable from 1998 (84%) through 2010 (80%)

#### ❖ How is Alaska Doing Relative to the *Healthy Alaskans 2010 Target*?

No *Healthy Alaskans 2010* target was set for this indicator; the *Healthy People 2010* target for the percentage of employed adults who work in smoke free environments is 100%. Since the baseline measurement of 84% in 1998, this indicator has remained flat and at a level below the *Healthy People 2010* target. **The *Healthy People 2010* target of 100% has not been met.**

#### ❖ How does AK compare with the US?

For the years where data are available for both Alaska and the US, the rates of smokefree workplaces have been comparable.

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## ❖ How are different populations affected?

Indoor workplace smoking bans are associated with socioeconomic status. Adults with lower levels of income and/or education are less likely (82%) to work in a place that bans smoking indoors than adults of higher SES (92%).

## What is the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services doing to improve this indicator?

In collaboration with partners statewide, the Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control (TPC) program provides leadership, coordinates resources, and promote efforts that support Alaskans in living healthy and tobacco-free lives. One goal of the TPC Program is to eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke. The TPC provides funding and technical assistance for community and school-based organizations to address secondhand smoke exposure in their communities and also provides education on the health benefits of smokefree air through statewide and local media campaigns. Additional information on current tobacco prevention efforts in Alaska is available at:

<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/tobacco/default.htm>.

## Indicator Definition and Notes

Percentage of employed adults aged 18 years and older who answer “Smoking is not allowed in any work areas” to the following question: *Which statement best describes your place of work’s official smoking policy for work areas?* Adults are considered employed if they give any response other than “Not employed” (that is, “Yes”, “No”, “Don’t Know/Not sure” or “Refused”) to the following question: *“While working at your job, are you indoors most of the time?”*.

## Data Sources

Alaska: Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services; US: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Alaska data were obtained from the Standard AK BRFSS in 1998, 2000, and 2001 and from the Supplemental AK BRFSS survey from 2004 through 2010. The Supplemental BRFSS survey is conducted using identical methodology as the Standard BRFSS and allows a doubling of the BRFSS sample size for those measures included on both surveys.

## References

1. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs-2007*. Atlanta; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; October 2007.
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health; 2004.
3. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Annual Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses-United States 2000-2004. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* 2008;57(45):1226-1228.
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2010.
5. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006.



Available at: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/>

