

ALASKA TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAM



Supporting healthy communities, schools, and families

FY2023 ANNUAL REPORT

PROGRAM FUNDING / RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Tobacco remains a leading cause of preventable death and disease in Alaska. Each year, about 600 people in Alaska die prematurely because of smoking. In the last 5-year report of Alaska’s Cancer Registry, more than 1,871 Alaska adults had been diagnosed with lung or bronchus cancer, a majority of which were caused by smoking or secondhand smoke exposure.¹

Smoking-related health care costs in Alaska were estimated at \$438 million in 2009.² Due to inflation and rising health care costs, this is very likely an underestimate of tobacco-related health care costs in Alaska. Alaska loses an estimated \$400 million per year because of smoking-related illness effects on workers and people not being able to do their usual activities.³ In 2016, Alaska Medicaid faced \$192 million in tobacco-related health care costs.⁴ In fiscal year (FY) 2022, long term forecasts of Medicaid spending in Alaska showed that reducing tobacco use beginning with 0.25% in FY2023 and growing to 5.0% by FY2042 would save \$6,713,542 by FY2027.⁴

The Tobacco Prevention and Control (TPC) program is funded through a combination of federal grant funds and Tobacco Use Education and Cessation (TUECF) Funds. TUECF combines funding from a portion of cigarette excise tax revenue and the landmark legal settlement with the tobacco manufacturers, known as the Master Settlement Agreement. Among other provisions, the agreement requires tobacco companies to make payments to states in perpetuity.

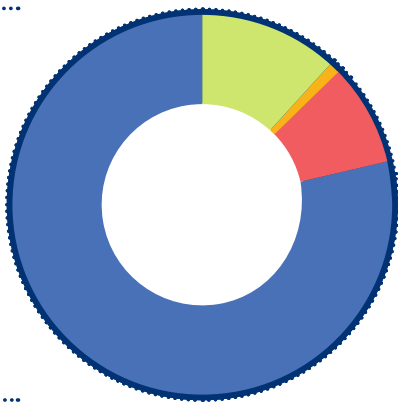
In FY2023, Alaska’s legislature appropriated \$6,471,300 in Tobacco Use Cessation Funds toward the administration of a comprehensive tobacco prevention and control program. The Division of Public Health was appropriated \$5,422,400 for the administration of Alaska’s Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. Division of Behavioral Health was appropriated \$943,600 for the administration of the Tobacco Enforcement and Youth Education Program.

In addition to state funds, the program received \$1,284,919 in federal funds through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)’s Office on Smoking and Health.

Fiscal Year 2023

FUNDING FOR COMPREHENSIVE TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAMMING

\$6.47m STATE FUNDS
+ \$1.28m FEDERAL FUNDS

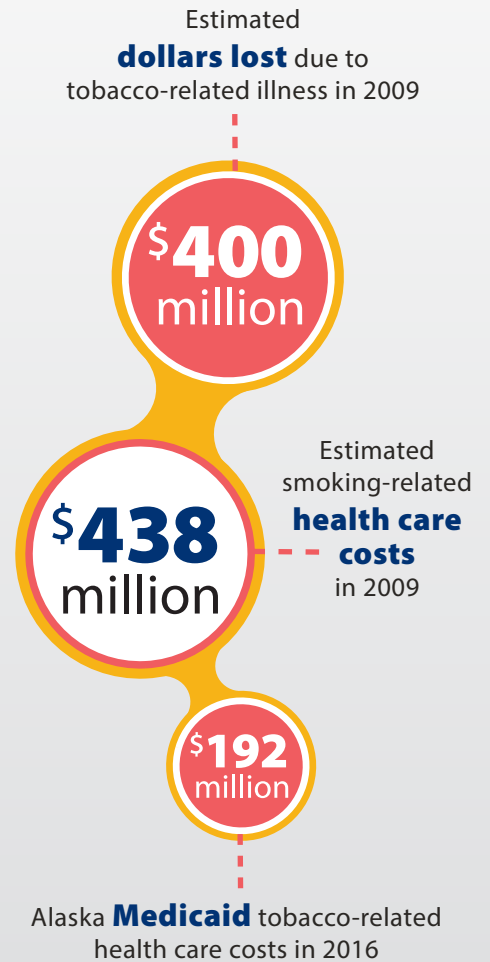


TUECF APPROPRIATIONS

- **\$5,422,400**—Division of Public Health—TPC Program
 - **\$943,600**—Division of Behavioral Health—Tobacco Enforcement and Youth Education Program
 - **\$105,300**—Department of Law
- FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS
- **\$1,284,919**—Federal grant funds received for the administration of the Comprehensive Tobacco Prevention and Control Program

The TPC program’s model is grounded in [CDC Best Practices](#) and includes five key components: **State and Community Interventions; Mass Reach Health Communications; Cessation Interventions; Surveillance and Evaluation; Infrastructure, Administration, and Management.** This report is designed to inform program partners and stakeholders of the ongoing activities within each of these components.

Money and lives lost to tobacco in Alaska



600 lives lost — Every year about 600 Alaskans die prematurely due to smoking

TOBACCO is a leading cause of preventable death and illness in Alaska

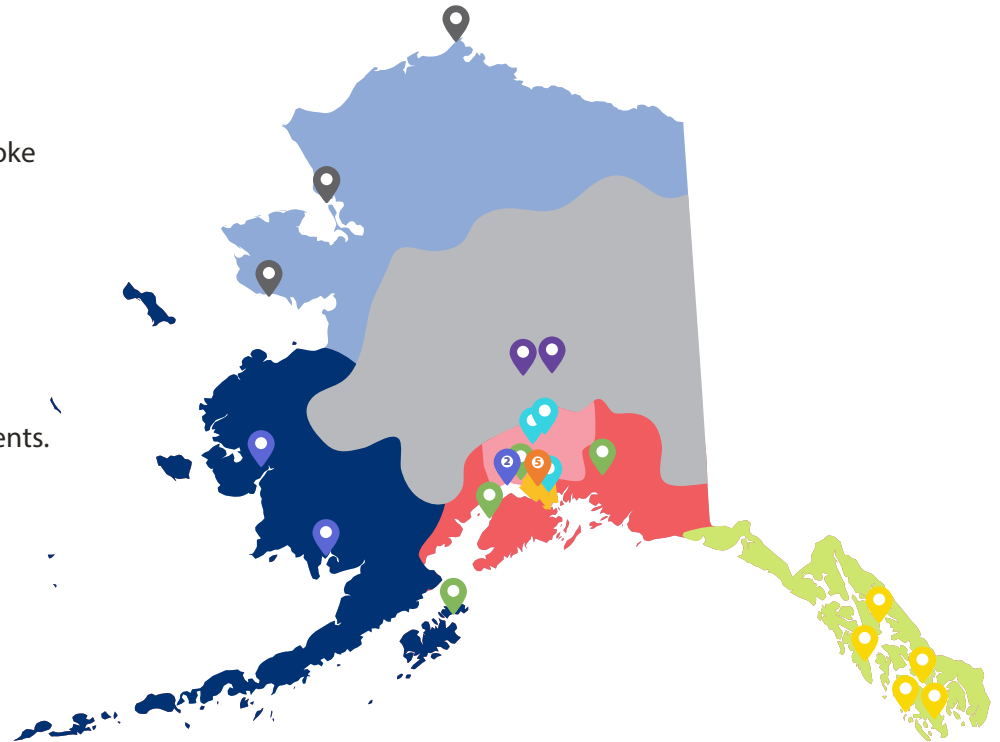
1,871 cases of lung or bronchus cancer were diagnosed in Alaska in the last five years mostly due to tobacco use/exposure

COMMUNITY BASED INTERVENTIONS

The TPC Program funded 21 community organizations across the state to tailor proven tobacco prevention and control interventions for their communities. TPC grantees are funded to serve communities across the seven public health regions. Awardees implemented activities that are proven to:

1. **Prevent youth from starting** to use tobacco
2. **Protect the public** from exposure to secondhand smoke
3. **Promote quitting** tobacco products
4. **Promote health equity** by identifying and eliminating tobacco-related disparities

Each awardee implements activities based on community needs assessments.



Interior Region

American Lung Association of Alaska

Service area: Fairbanks

Railbelt Mental Health & Addictions

Service area(s): Anderson, Cantwell, Denali, Fairbanks, Healy, Interior Region, McKinley Park, Nenana, North Pole, North Star Borough

Tanana Chiefs Conference

Service area: Interior Region

Northern Region

Maniilaq Association

Service area(s): Kotzebue/Norton Sound Region, Northwest Arctic

Norton Sound Health Corporation

Service area(s): Bering Strait Region, Brevig Mission, Diomedes, Elim, Gambell, Golovin, Koyuk, Nome, Nome US Census Area, Norton Sound, Saint Michael, Savoonga, Shaktoolik, Shishmaref, Stebbins, Teller, Unalakleet, Wales, White Mountain

North Slope Borough Health Department

Service area(s): North Slope

Southwest Region

Aleutian Pribilof Indian Association

Service area(s): Aleutian Pribilof

Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation

Service area: Bristol Bay

Eastern Aleutian Tribes

Service area(s): Adak, Akutan, Cold Bay, False Pass, King Cove, Nelson Lagoon, Sand Point, Whittier

Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation

Service area: Yukon Kuskokwim

Mat-Su Region

Alaska Family Services

Service area(s): Mat-Su Borough

American Lung Association in Alaska

Service area(s): Anchorage, Fairbanks, Mat-Su

Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Incorporated

Service area(s): Anchorage, Mat-Su

Anchorage

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Service area: Anchorage

American Lung Association in Alaska

Service area(s): Anchorage, Interior

Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Incorporated

Service area(s): Anchorage, Mat-Su

University of Alaska, Anchorage - Department of Health Sciences

Service area: Anchorage

Volunteers of America Alaska

Service area: Anchorage

Gulf Coast Region

Copper River Native Association

Service area(s): Cantwell, Chistochina, Chitina, Copper Center, Copper River, Copperville, Gakona, Glennallen, Gulkana, Kenny Lake, Kluti-Kaah, McCarthy, Mendeltna, Mentasta Lake, Nelchina, Silver Springs, Slana, Tazlina, Tonsina, Willow

Chugachmiut, Incorporated

Service area(s): Chenega Bay, Cordova, Eyak, Homer, Nanwalek, Port Graham, Seward, Tatitlek, Valdez

Kenaitze Indian Tribe

Service area(s): Coho, Funny River, Kalifornsky, Kasilof, Kenai, Nikiski, Ridgeway, Salamatof, Soldotna, Sterling

Kodiak Area Native Association

Service area(s): Akhiok, Chiniak, Karluk, Kodiak, Kodiak Station, Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, Port Lions, Womens Bay

Southeast Region

Residential Youth Care

Service area: Southeast Region

Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium

Service area(s): Southeast Region (Juneau, Ketchikan, POW/Klawock, Sitka, Wrangell)

STATE INTERVENTIONS

Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control funded 4 organizations to support statewide implementation of proven tobacco prevention and control strategies and to provide training and support to community grantees:

American Lung Association:

Helps TPC grantees and unfunded communities conduct community needs assessments and implement proven tobacco prevention and control policy interventions to prevent youth from starting tobacco use and create healthful, tobacco-free environments.

One highlight for the American Lung Association in Alaska included providing support to the community of Petersburg, resulting in their school districts' approval for comprehensive tobacco free school policy. The Lung Association also partnered with Petersburg Medical Center (PMC) to implement the INDEPTH alternative to the suspension program. The PMC is also training staff in the Not On Tobacco (N-O-T) youth cessation program.

Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights Foundation:

Supports a comprehensive orientation and training program which ensures that community grantees and partners are well prepared to implement evidence-based tobacco prevention and control Interventions. One highlight in FY2023 included hosting a statewide annual Tobacco Prevention and Control Conference in Anchorage, AK. Grantees and community partners from across the state were provided in-depth training on proven tobacco prevention and control interventions. Attendance ranged between 60-70 professionals each day.

Northwest Strategies:

Supports TPC program and community partners in administering mass-reach health communications which meet CDC Best Practices. In FY2023, Northwest Strategies provided assistance to 13 grantees and supported the program's public education campaigns highlighted on page 4.

RurAL CAP:

Empowers youth to provide education to their peers on the health harms of tobacco; facilitates Alaska's statewide Youth Ambassador Program, Youth Empowering Alaskans Health (YEAH); and provides training and technical assistance to community grantees on best practices to engage youth in tobacco prevention and control.

In FY2023, RurAL CAP supported the YEAH Ambassadors in hosting their annual YEAH Summit. The Summit provided health education to youth about tobacco and nicotine products and encouraged youth to help educate their peers. The Summit was led by three ambassadors and attended by youth and parents from Chevak, New Stuyahok, White Mountain, Juneau, Utqiagvik, and Anchorage.

Congratulations to our Teen Ambassadors, Leena Edais, Roey Armstrong, and Jasmine Biswokarma for hosting a successful summit to help their peers!



Health communication campaigns are one of the top ways Alaskans hear about Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line

Health communication campaigns reduce tobacco and e-cigarette use and secondhand smoke exposure, counter tobacco industry advertising, shift social norms around tobacco use, reduce tobacco-related health disparities, and reduce health care costs and save lives.⁵ Given the effectiveness of these campaigns, Alaska's TPC program uses communication strategies to promote cessation services, run counter-marketing messages, and share public education statewide.

Real Alaskans' stories

Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line shares real stories from Alaskans who quit smoking, chewing, and vaping with the help of Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line.

Meet Dusty

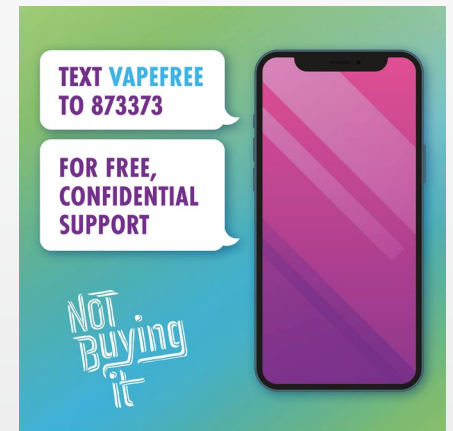
Dusty, age 48, started chewing tobacco at age 17. Dusty tried to quit many times. Last year, Dusty saw a message from Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line on television and decided to call right then and there. He wanted to quit for his children. With the help of the Quit Line's quit coaching and nicotine gum, he finally quit for good. Now, he feels better. He has more money saved from not buying chew to enjoy the things he loves, like snowmachining, fishing, and camping with his family.

Dusty says: "My motivation for quitting was my kids. I know that my family is worth more to me than chewing tobacco."



"I think it was probably one of the hardest things ever, to quit."

— Dusty of Wasilla



Sharing facts about vaping and resources to quit

To address high numbers of Alaska teens vaping, the TPC program produced and distributed a youth vaping toolkit with public education materials for community partners, tobacco grantees, parents/caretakers, and schools concerned with the youth vaping epidemic. To date, the TPC program has filled over 150 orders from schools and health professionals across 52 of the 54 school districts.

Alaska launches Fresh Start programs



In December 2022, Alaska launched the Fresh Start campaign, sharing free programs for better health, including Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line. These programs aim to help Alaskans lose weight, move more, lower blood sugar or blood pressure, and stop using tobacco and vaping. All of these programs are free.

Visit freshstart.alaska.gov to find out more about the campaign and to explore available programs.



"I feel so much better. My skin looks better. You save a heck of a lot of money when you quit smoking."
— Brenda of Nikiski

Quit Line campaign messages are leading to healthy changes

According to Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line data, **communication channels** were among the top ways Alaskans heard about the Quit Line in FY2023.

More than
1 in 3

people who enrolled learned about Quit Line services through communication campaigns

COMPREHENSIVE TOBACCO PROGRAMS DRIVE RESULTS



New Alaska Tobacco Price Increase

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

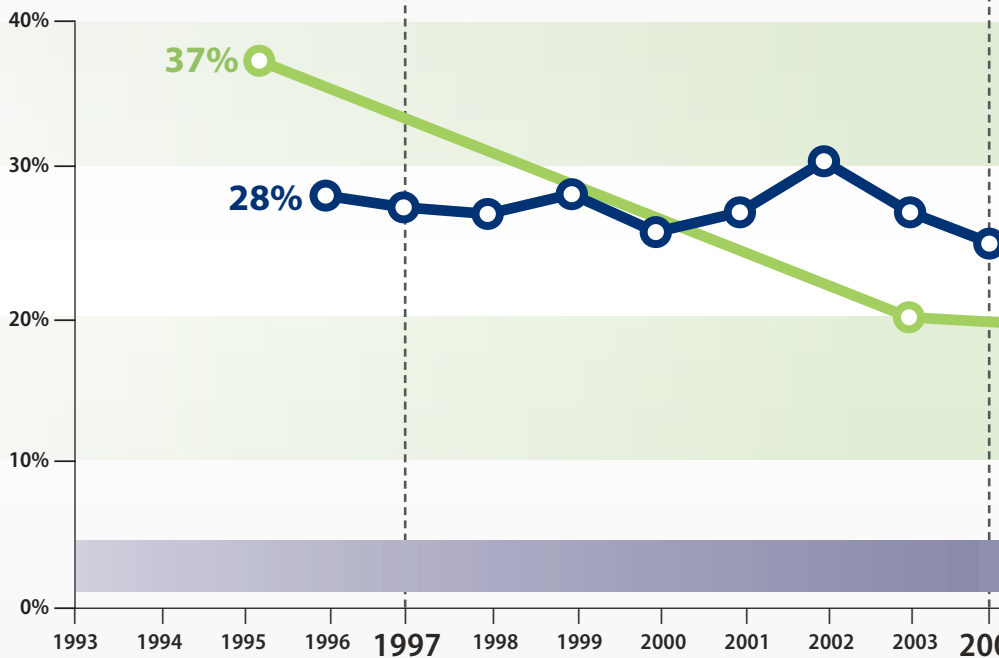


Tobacco Prevalence: Percentage of Alaska People who Smoke/Vape by Year

- 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.

* The Alaska YRBS was not administered in 2021. Data collected in 2023 will be available in 2024.



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.



Parent e-cigarette education campaign developed in 2020.

Teen text program added in 2021.



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.

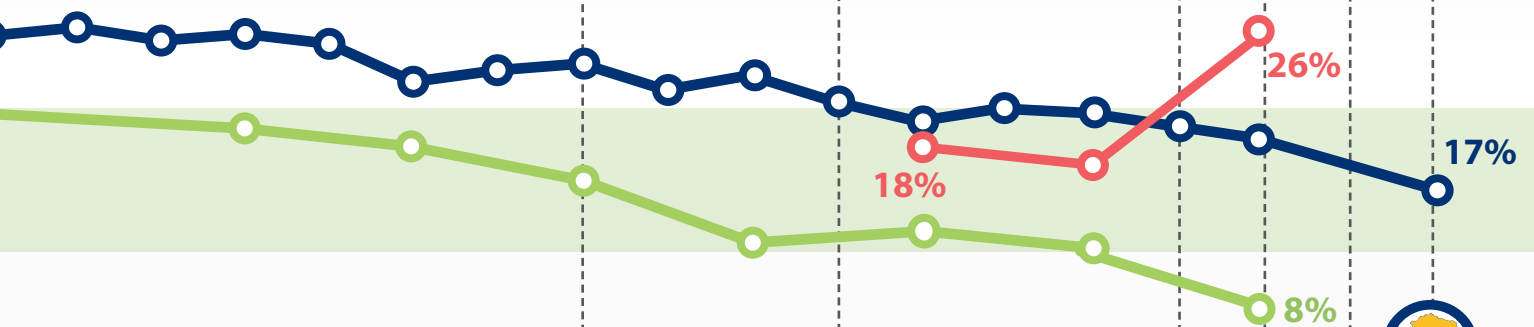
Increased Alaska Tobacco Prices

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

TPC program launches e-cigarette public education campaign.



Youth e-cigarette public education campaign begins.



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

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

In Fiscal Year 2023

1,753

Alaskans served by Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line from all 7 public health regions.



352

Alaska Native adults received services from Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line, which is a

12%

increase from 2022

34

Alaska women who were either pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding who enrolled in the pregnancy program.



803

Alaskan adults who called the Quit Line reported at least one behavioral health condition.



Supporting Alaskans who want to quit tobacco for good

Alaska TPC funds Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line, a free service that provides quit coaching and nicotine replacement therapy over the phone and online to all Alaskans who use tobacco products. Research shows that access to counseling and nicotine replacement therapy increases the chances of a successful quit.⁶

Quit Line Reach

During FY2023, the Quit Line served 1,753 Alaskans from 7 public health regions. Last fiscal year, 803 people with a behavioral health condition called the Quit Line; 34 women who were either pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding enrolled in the pregnancy Quit Line program; and 352 Alaska Native people also enrolled in services during this time period. This was an increase of 12% from FY2022. This increase followed focused efforts by the program to tailor educational and outreach materials for Alaska Native people and to support health systems in developing and implementing internal protocols to make it easier for providers to screen for tobacco use, advise patients to quit, and connect patients with treatment for tobacco use.

Streamlined Enrollment

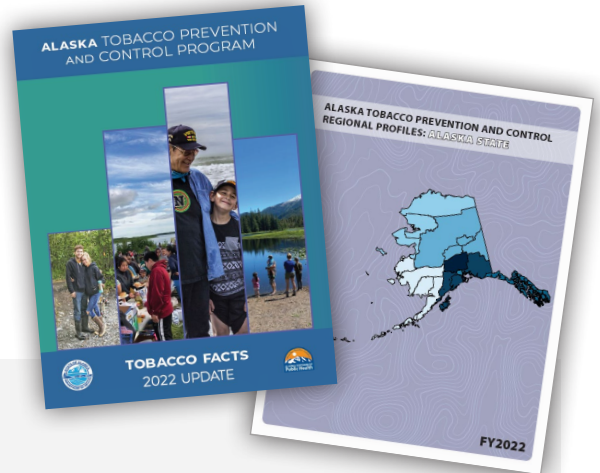
Following the decline in Quit Line enrollments reported in 2022 and findings that suggested that stress could be a contributing factor, TPC implemented activities to increase statewide reach to people experiencing mental health challenges that can make quitting harder. TPC partnered with behavioral health providers to help them talk with their patients about quitting and released two public service announcements focused on managing stress when quitting. TPC and the Quit Line also streamlined the enrollment process for those eligible for the enhanced behavioral health Quit Line program. Following these efforts, the program increased reach and treatment to people who experienced mental health conditions and continues to monitor what is effective and where approaches can be improved.

“Everyone that I have talked with understands that this is truly an addiction and crutch. They were/are very gracious in letting folks know that there is someone on the other end of the line that is always willing to answer questions, and help get us through the tough moments, and remain on a positive path to freeing ourselves.”

— 2023 PARTICIPANT OF ALASKA'S TOBACCO QUIT LINE

What the numbers tell us

In FY2023, the TPC program continued to monitor and report tobacco trends. Publications included a comprehensive report on the burden of tobacco in *Alaska Tobacco Facts* and *Regional Profiles*. These reports showed that while tremendous progress has been made, many people are still at risk for poor health outcomes due to tobacco or nicotine products, and some groups of people have greater chances than others. Understanding these differences informs statewide interventions and helps local organizations plan and tailor interventions to best support their communities.



Four-step process to turn data into action



Measuring and evaluating tobacco trends help develop effective action plans.

Engaging Alaskans in turning data into action ensures that solutions and interventions are tailored to reflect unique community strengths and needs.

Monitoring the successes of tobacco use treatment

The TPC Program and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's (ANTHC) Epidemiology Center continued efforts to research successes as well as barriers to tobacco use treatment in Alaska, with emphasis on identifying barriers experienced by Alaska Native people who use tobacco. Studies underway engage both people who have used Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line, and all Alaska adults through a separate survey, to understand what support people have received from the Quit Line, their healthcare providers, and what successes and barriers they experienced when quitting. This effort is ongoing and will continue through May 2024.

Complementing these studies, the program worked with tribal health partners to plan talking circles. These talking circles gathered feedback from Alaska Native communities and tribal health systems to improve Quit Line services and tailor services for Alaska Native people. These circles launched in fall 2023.

2023 Talking Circle Communities



Comprehensive tobacco programs deliver by:

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



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

Infrastructure, Administration, and Management activities:

Provide leadership

Strategic planning

Foster collaboration

Program oversight

Technical assistance

Training

Effective coordination of resources

Grant and contract management

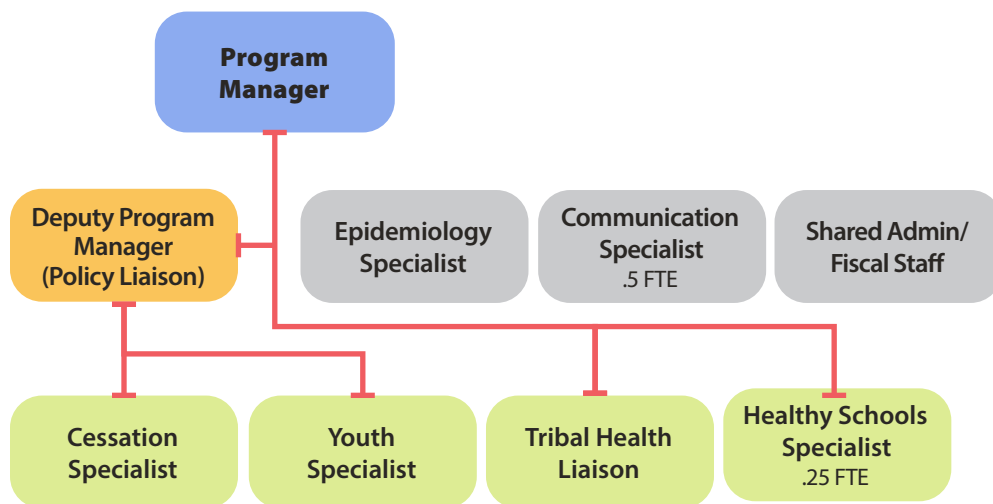
Elements of success

The program implements CDC Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs.

Staffing and organization

Program funds ensured adequate staff capacity to administer a comprehensive tobacco control program: Program Manager, Policy Liaison, Communications Specialist, Cessation Specialist, Youth Specialist, Tribal Health Liaison, Epidemiology Specialist, Fiscal management systems staff and administrative staff.

Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program Organizational Chart



Management and oversight

The state office provides ongoing research, training, assistance and consultation to grantees, contractors, partners and communities to ensure accurate and current education on tobacco products and impacts to Alaska communities. State staff provide oversight and management to grant and contract awardees in accordance with State of Alaska policies and procedures.

Training and assistance

Ongoing training and assistance is provided to communities and grantees through networks and partnerships with statewide contractors and community partners. The program and statewide contractors support Communities of Practice, which are a group of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis.¹³ These communities foster collaborative learning, building networks, and distributing resources related to topics like smokefree policies, strategies to prevent youth initiation of tobacco products, youth education and engagement, tobacco cessation, efforts to advance health equity for Alaska Native people, and emerging trends in tobacco control.

Sources:

1. Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health, Health Analytics and Vital Records Section. 2023. Incidence of Cancers Associated with Screening and Modifiable Risk Factors. Anchorage: Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. Accessed March 10, 2023. https://health.alaska.gov/dph/VitalStats/Documents/cancerregistry/ACR%20Screening%20Report_20230207.pdf
2. Centers for Disease Control (CDC). January 27, 2023. Smoking and Tobacco Use: State Fact Sheets. Accessed March 10, 2023. www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/state-fact-sheets/alaska/
3. Shrestha, S. S. 2022. Cost of Cigarette Smoking-Attributable Productivity Losses. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 478-485. Accessed March 10, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2022.04.032>
4. Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, Section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. The cost of eight chronic conditions on Alaska's Medicaid Program. Report prepared by Evergreen Economics, October 18, 2017. Accessed March 20, 2023. Available at: https://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Documents/Publications/2017_CostOfChronicConditions_EvergreenEconomics_web.pdf
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs. 2014. Accessed March 10, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/guides/pdfs/2014/comprehensive.pdf>
6. US Department of Health and Human Services. Smoking Cessation: A Report of the Surgeon General. 2020. Accessed March 10, 2023. www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2020-cessation-sgr-full-report.pdf

Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program Resources & Fact sheets:



- Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program: health.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Tobacco/
- Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line: www.alaskaquitline.com
- Alaska's Not Buying It youth prevention and education campaign: Notbuyingitak.com
- Tobacco 21 policy resources: <https://tobacco21.org>

Fact sheets:

- Tobacco and School Suspensions
- Tobacco and Behavioral Health
- Tobacco and Alaska Native People
- Tobacco and Diabetes



Knik Charter School students wear orange "Vape-Free" bracelets.

KEY TOBACCO PREVENTION PARTNERS

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.



NORTHERN



INTERIOR



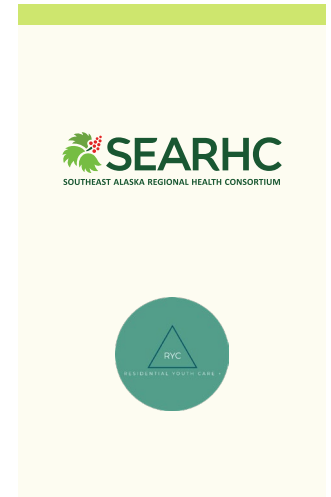
SOUTHCENTRAL



SOUTHWEST



SOUTHEAST



STATEWIDE



State of Alaska
 Michael J. Dunleavy, Governor
Department of Health and Social Services
 Heidi Hedberg, Commissioner
 Anne Zink, MD, FACEP, Chief Medical Officer
Division of Public Health
 Lindsey Kato, Director



January, 2024