

State of Alaska

Tobacco Prevention

and

Control Program

# STRATEGIC PLAN

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# MISSION 100

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December 2012

Tobacco use costs Alaska \$579 million annually in direct medical costs and lost productivity due to tobacco-related death. Alaska's wise investment in evidence-based public health strategies over the past 10 years has saved the state an estimated \$400 million in healthcare and over 8,900 premature deaths. The Tobacco Prevention and Control (TPC) Program and its partners and stakeholders have been successful in reducing tobacco prevalence and promoting health equity in Alaska.

Despite all the progress made toward a 100 percent tobacco-free Alaska, much work remains. Alaskan adults smoking prevalence is 21 percent. In some populations, prevalence is much higher. Only half of Alaskans are protected from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke through public smoking policies. Fewer young people become tobacco users than a decade ago, but many youth still become addicted to tobacco and will suffer from decades of disease and premature death, despite our efforts to date. Therefore, we must continue this important work to protect the health of Alaskans. We are committed to utilizing resources and strategically aligning our mission with partners, stakeholders and other health organizations statewide and nationally.

The TPC Program is pleased to share our priorities for the next four years. This plan is intended to outline our approach to improving health outcomes, communicate our program vision and convey our strategic priorities.

Please support our efforts to promote the health of Alaskans by working towards a tobacco-free Alaska!



Ward Hurlburt, M.D., MPH  
Chief Medical Officer  
State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services



# THE REAL COST OF TOBACCO IN ALASKA

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Approximately 31 million packs of cigarettes are sold in Alaska each year, with about \$280 million in sales and \$71 million in state tax revenue.<sup>1</sup> Another \$17 million is spent annually by cigarette manufacturers to advertise and promote tobacco sales in Alaska alone.<sup>2</sup> The state's tobacco tax has been raised over the years, most recently in 2008 to \$2 per pack, with an overall average retail price of \$8.85.<sup>3</sup>

This may seem like a system that pays for itself. The real cost of tobacco, however, is much higher. Every pack of cigarettes purchased in Alaska costs the state \$19 in healthcare costs and lost productivity due to premature death.<sup>4</sup> Overall, tobacco use in Alaska costs approximately \$579 million each year: we spend \$348 million in direct medical expenditures such as emergency care and treatment for chronic diseases related to tobacco use.<sup>4</sup> Alaska's economy also suffers an estimated \$231 million in lost productivity due to premature death and years of life lost because of tobacco use.<sup>4</sup> That is almost eight times the amount of tobacco tax revenue the state receives each year.

These numbers do not include the estimated hours lost due to illness or poor health, nor do they include the health complications or premature deaths of those exposed to secondhand smoke. The real cost is certainly higher, and represents a significant portion of both Alaska's and the nation's rising healthcare budget. Adults who rely on state-funded Medicaid are much more likely to smoke, and approximately 35 percent of adult Medicaid recipients in the U.S. are current tobacco users.<sup>5</sup>

Tobacco addiction also incurs a high human cost, contributing to the death of approximately 600 Alaskans each year, or about one out of five deaths.<sup>6</sup> Children who are exposed to tobacco smoke in their homes are more likely to suffer from asthma and long-term respiratory problems. Young people who start smoking early in life will find it difficult to quit when they are older. Low income adults are more likely to smoke than those with higher incomes, and they are least able to afford this expensive and harmful habit. Alaska Native people are also harmed disproportionately by tobacco use: Alaska Native adults smoke at almost twice the rate of non-Natives.<sup>6</sup> Prevalence among Alaska Native youth has decreased significantly in recent years, but Alaska Native youth continue to start using tobacco earlier in life than non-Native Alaskans.





*Tobacco accounts for approximately one-fifth of all Alaska deaths<sup>6</sup> and costs our state approximately \$579 million every year in direct medical costs and lost productivity.<sup>4</sup>*

## INVESTING WISELY IN PUBLIC HEALTH

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified best practices and strategies for a comprehensive tobacco control program. Some that are proven to work: passing and enforcing tobacco-free workplace policies; providing free and widely-available

cessation support; raising taxes on tobacco products; marketing campaigns to educate the public; and restricting young people's access to tobacco by restricting sales to minors. These strategies are intended to be used together, supported by sustained state funding. The four goals for a comprehensive tobacco program to strive for are to:

1. Prevent youth from starting tobacco use;
2. Promote cessation of tobacco use among youth and adults;
3. Protect the public from exposure to secondhand smoke; and
4. Identify and eliminate tobacco-related disparities and achieve health equity.

The evidence from several states (including California, New York, Washington and Alaska) shows that implementing a state-funded comprehensive program reduces prevalence of tobacco use over time, which means fewer tobacco users and fewer people exposed to secondhand smoke.



## WORKING TOGETHER, REACHING FURTHER

**Vision:** For all Alaskans to live healthy and tobacco-free lives.

**Mission:** Provide leadership, effectively coordinate resources and promote efforts that support Alaskans with living healthy and tobacco-free lives.

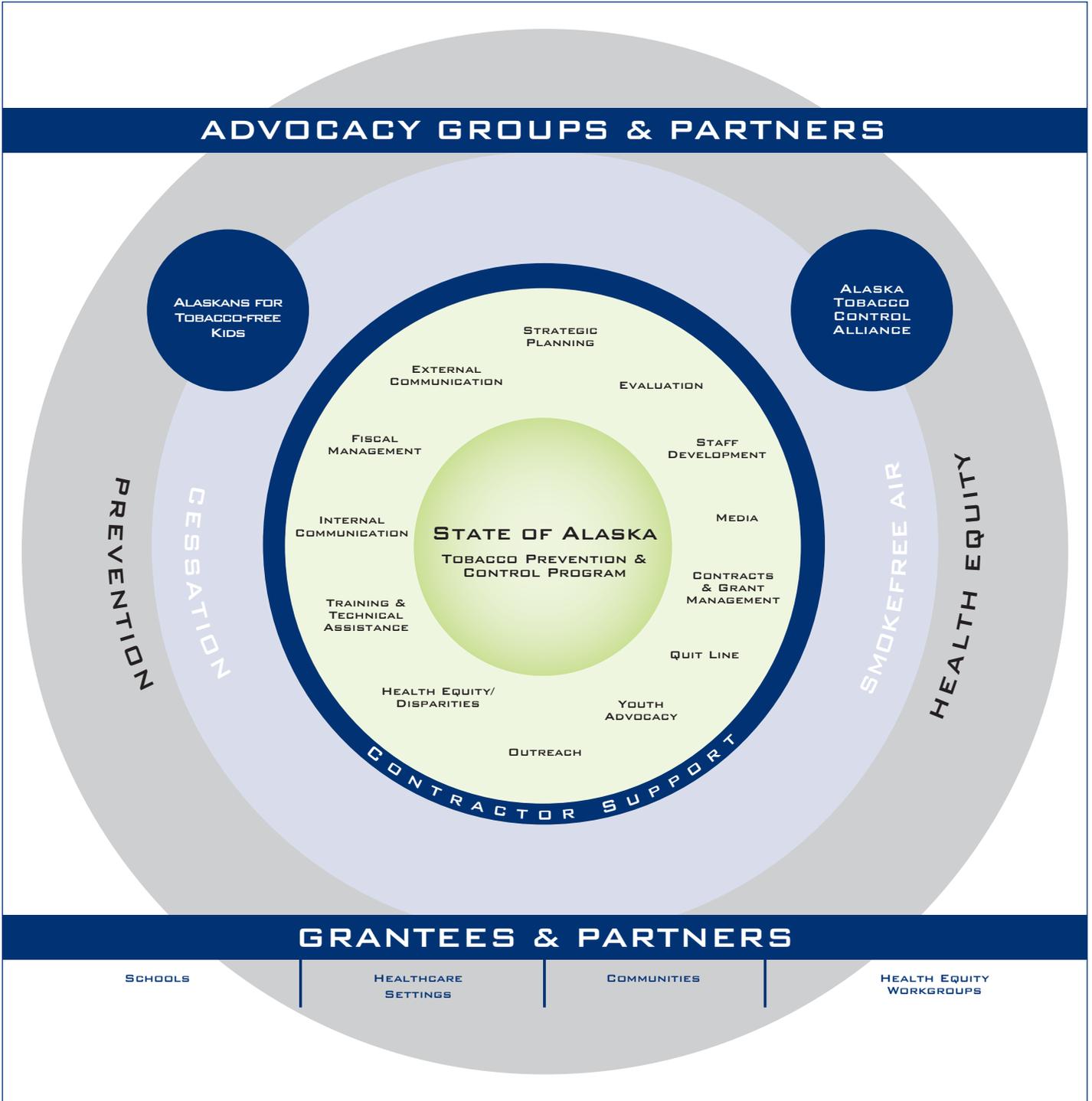
Alaska's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program has made significant progress. Cigarette sales have declined by more than 50 percent between 1996 and 2010.<sup>7</sup> Adult prevalence decreased by 25 percent and high school students' prevalence has dropped by over 60 percent as well in the same period.<sup>8</sup> As a result, Alaska has saved almost \$400 million in healthcare costs.<sup>9</sup>

Addressing tobacco use and its consequences requires a comprehensive approach. Tobacco prevention and control efforts are supported in Alaska by a variety of public and private sector partners, who work to improve the public's health and prevent unnecessary loss of life, health, time and resources. Volunteers, community associations, policymakers, advocates and state public health staff share a passionate commitment to ending tobacco use in Alaska.

The State of Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control (TPC) Program provides support and coordination to partners to ensure financial and human resources dedicated to tobacco prevention and control are used effectively and as intended. Key partners include the Alaska Tobacco Control Alliance (ATCA), Alaskans for Tobacco-free Kids (ATFK), and the many healthcare organizations, schools, communities, non-profit organizations and private businesses that support a tobacco-free Alaska.



# PARTNERS IN TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CONTROL



# THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The TPC Program is committed to promoting healthy behaviors by using evidence-based public health strategies. The Program follows these guiding principles:

- Promote, follow and contribute to established best practices
- Use research and data to guide our work
- Prioritize environmental and systems change
- Strive for health equity by eliminating disparities through our policies and practices
- Collaborate, communicate and coordinate to strategically engage both internal and external stakeholders
- Achieve and measure expected results

## PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

The TPC Program is comprehensive and includes the five (5) components recommended by the CDC's *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs*:

1. State and Community Interventions
2. Health Communication Interventions
3. Cessation Interventions
4. Surveillance and Evaluation
5. Administration and Management

The TPC Program delivers services by providing funding to local programs through community-based grants, coordinating technical assistance to implement clinical and public health best practices for tobacco prevention and cessation, support for media counter-marketing campaigns and evaluation of program efforts. The grant program provides funding directly to community organizations to strengthen local tobacco prevention efforts and address CDC comprehensive goal areas.



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



In FY2014, the TPC Program will integrate its funding mechanisms and approach to community-based programming to encourage regional collaboration: bringing schools, communities, health systems and other partners together within a defined parameter or region. Funded partners (grantees) will not only engage with leaders and organizations in their communities, but will also participate in a diverse regional coalition of representatives from a variety of settings. Using the goals identified by the TPC Program as a guide and informed by region-specific disparities in tobacco use, coalitions will develop work plans to address their own regional priorities.

Coordinated efforts will also support advocates' work to build a broad base of public support for a statewide smokefree workplace policy that covers all Alaskans. The TPC Program seeks to strengthen its alliances with tribal entities, health organizations, communities, school districts and other organizations that have an interest in promoting the public's health and well-being. When organizations take a stand against tobacco it encourages peer organizations to follow suit, helping shift social norms to make tobacco use unacceptable, and communicate that protecting the public from tobacco is a top priority for Alaska.



### PROGRAM PRIORITIES: MISSION 100

To achieve a tobacco-free Alaska through comprehensive public health strategies, the TPC Program funds and administers several efforts at the statewide and local levels. In addition to following the CDC recommendations for program design, Alaska's program focuses particularly on what works in Alaska, overcoming the challenge of geographic distance to reach people in all parts of the state, and actively engaging with Alaska Native tribal and health leaders to make tobacco a high-priority issue.

In 2011, the TPC Program began Mission 100: a 100% tobacco-free Alaska. Mission 100 is a statewide technical assistance and outreach initiative designed to provide education and technical assistance around tobacco prevention and control practices statewide. To ensure the widest reach, Mission 100 leverages existing partnerships

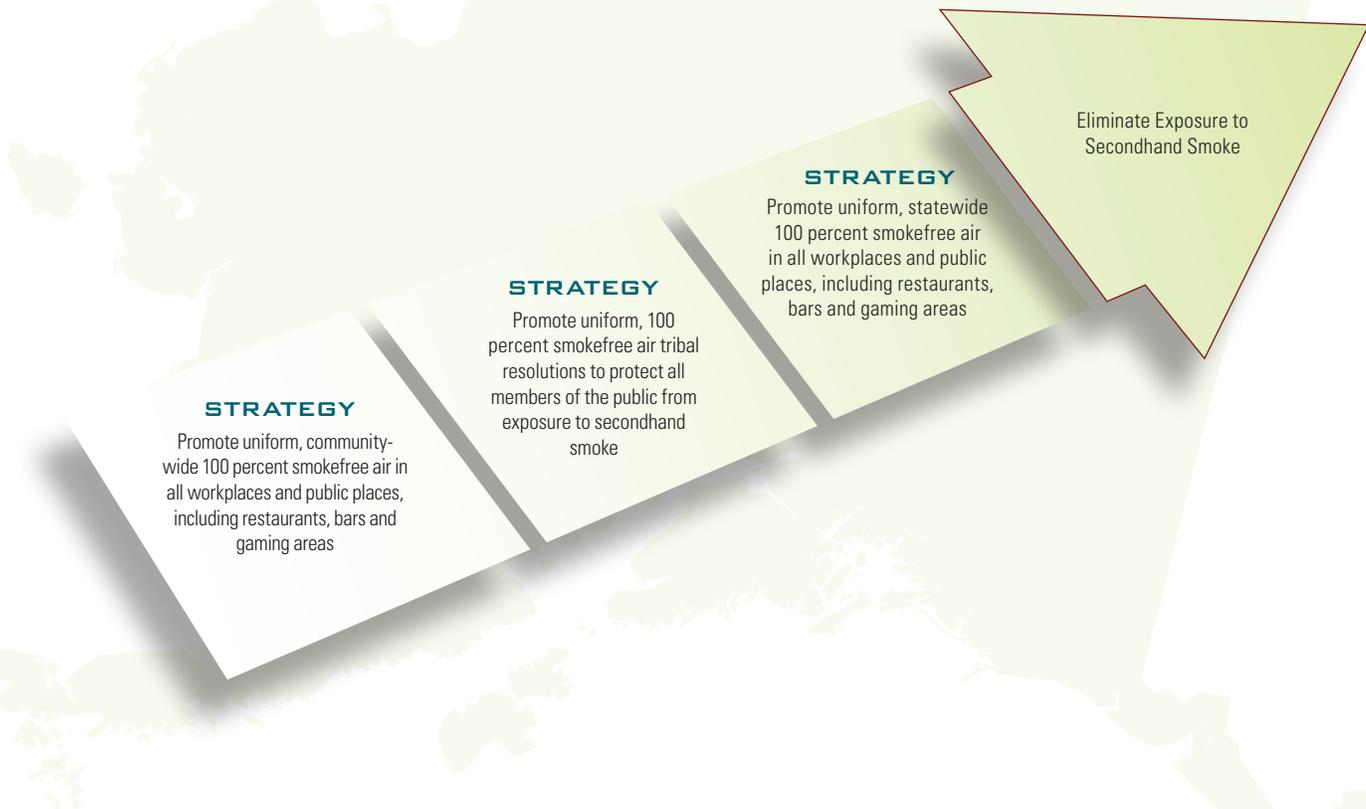
and engages traditional and non-traditional stakeholders and grantees.

The TPC Program's long-term vision is to expand Mission 100 to become a comprehensive technical assistance resource for worksites, military, schools and communities. Mission 100 provides streamlined support and a well-defined process for any organization ready to work toward being tobacco-free.

In 2011, the TPC Program developed a strategic plan to identify high-priority strategies for each of the four CDC goal areas. The program's strategies for the next four years are described in the following sections.

**PRIORITY:**  
**ELIMINATE EXPOSURE TO SECONDHAND SMOKE**

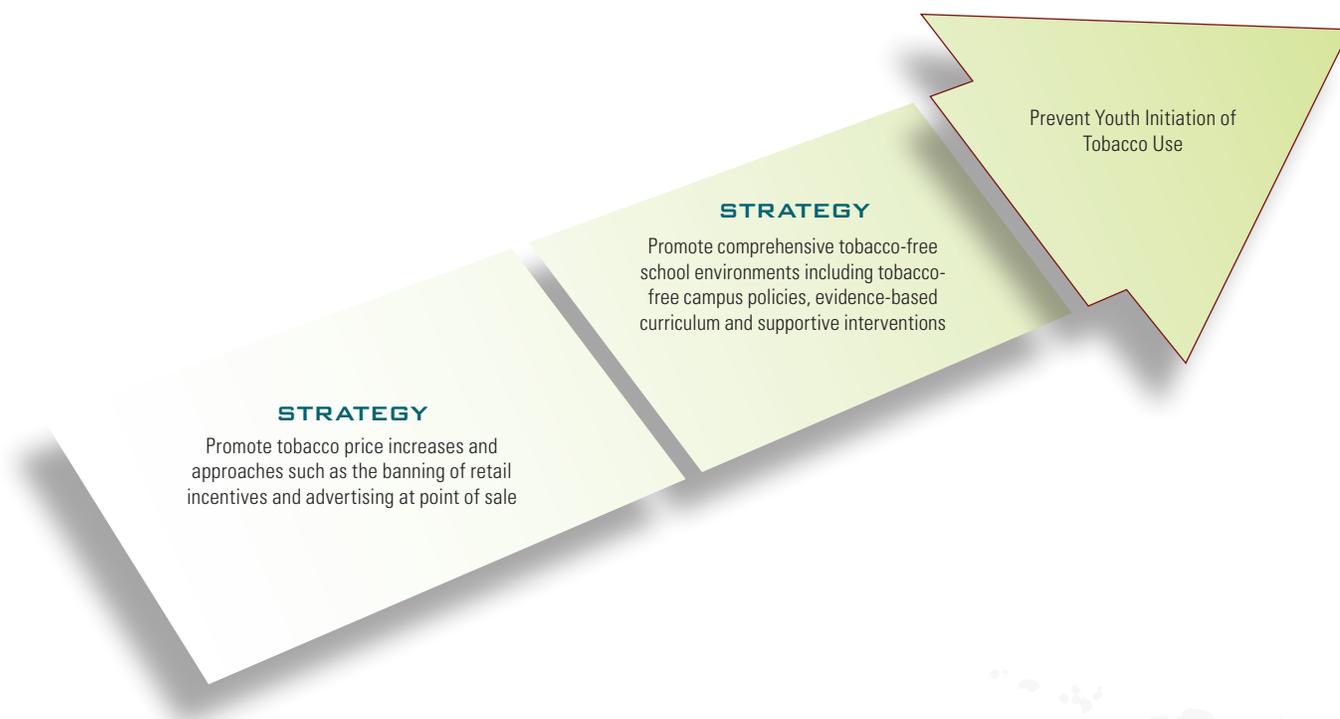
The TPC Program's highest priority strategy for the next four years is to provide public education and support so all workplaces in Alaska are smokefree. While some communities (including Anchorage) have passed smokefree workplace laws, many Alaskan workers are still exposed to tobacco smoke while on the job. Smokefree workplaces are proven to reduce tobacco use, support attempts to quit, prevent initiation (adult and youth) and protect the public from exposure to secondhand smoke.





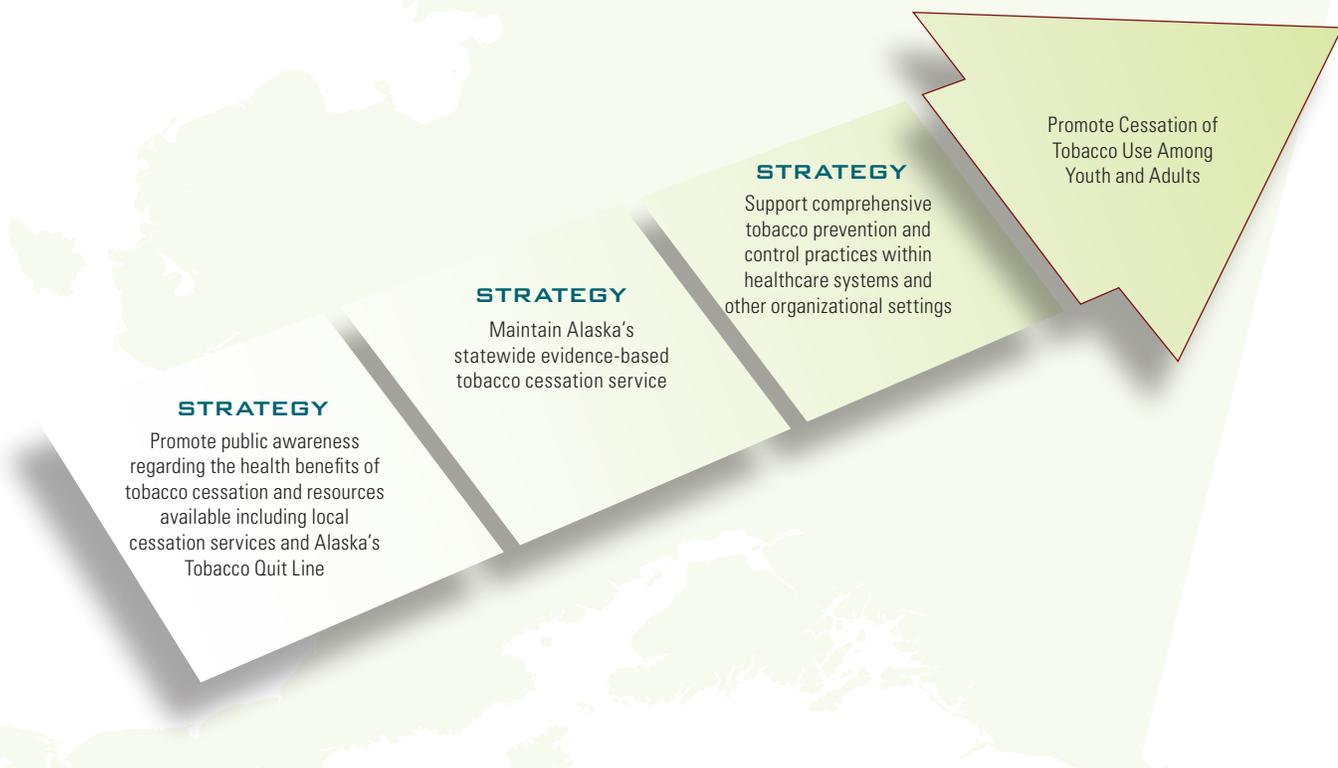
**PRIORITY:**  
**PREVENT YOUTH INITIATION OF TOBACCO USE**

Every aspect of a comprehensive tobacco program deters youth tobacco use initiation—tax increases, media campaigns and changing social norms are particularly effective.



**PRIORITY:**  
**PROMOTE CESSATION OF TOBACCO USE AMONG YOUTH AND ADULTS**

Quitting tobacco provides health benefits at any age. Physical addiction, learned behaviors and social norms work together to make quitting tobacco extremely difficult. The following strategies are designed to enhance access to quitting resources, increase the number of quit attempts among tobacco users and improve the efficacy of quit attempts.



**PRIORITY:**  
**ELIMINATE HEALTH DISPARITIES AND DECREASE TOBACCO  
 PREVALENCE WITHIN PRIORITY POPULATIONS**

Tobacco use directly or indirectly harms everyone in Alaska, but some people bear a greater burden of health issues, high costs and other problems. Addressing and eliminating health disparities in Alaska is a high priority of the TPC Program. Employing tobacco use and health data, the program has identified certain Alaskan populations who are disparately impacted by tobacco use: Alaska Native youth and adults, people of low socioeconomic status (SES) and young adults (age 18 to 29). While in the past health disparities and health equity have been one component of the program's efforts, TPC has committed to integrating a focus on these disparate populations into all of our work, from regional coalition work plans to ongoing data surveillance and evaluation. Eliminating tobacco-related disparities will not only decrease overall rates of tobacco use in the state, but will also help lessen the economic and health burdens of tobacco on those most affected.

**STRATEGY**  
 Continue to support culturally relevant practices and modify program approaches as necessary

**STRATEGY**  
 Monitor existing tobacco use burdens in specific populations and identify emerging priority populations

**STRATEGY**  
 Ensure work in all goal areas addresses health equity through tailored strategies and targeted outreach to disparate populations

Identify and Eliminate Tobacco-Related Disparities

# SOURCES

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- <sup>8</sup> Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 1996, 2010 and Alaska Youth Behavior Risk Survey (YRBS), 1995, 2011.
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MISSION **100**

TOBACCO-FREE ALASKA



Sean Parnell, Governor, State of Alaska  
William J. Streur, Commissioner, Department of Health and Social Services

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