

# FY 2013

## ALASKA TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAM

"Alaska has made tremendous progress in reducing smoking, but it is unacceptable that tobacco still kills and sickens so many people and places such a huge financial burden on our society. On this 50th Anniversary of the first Surgeon General's report, it's time for our nation and our state to take strong action to end the tobacco epidemic. We know how to do it, and we cannot afford to wait another 50 years."

— WARD B. HURLBURT, M.D., MPH, ALASKA'S CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

# FISCAL YEAR 2013

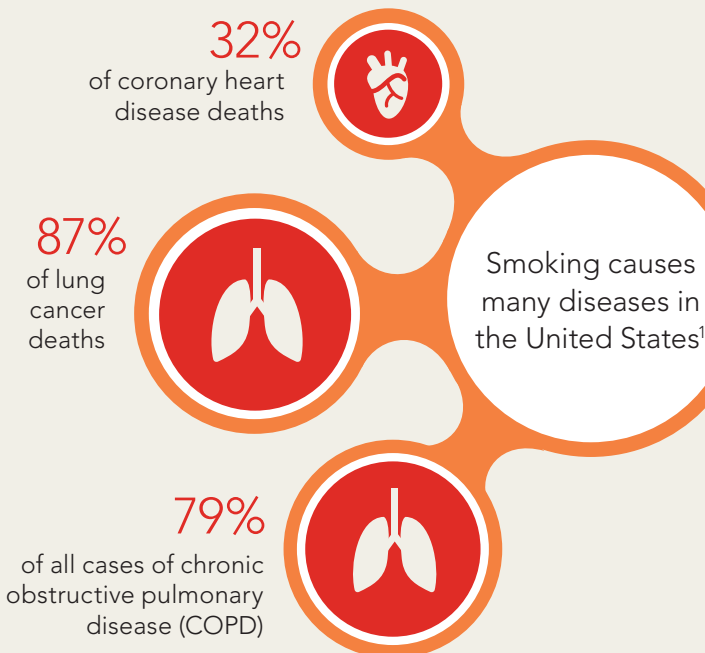
## A return on investment

Alaska Annual Tobacco Revenue and Cost (dollars in millions)



The U.S. Surgeon General and national leaders have set a goal to end the tobacco epidemic for good. Research continues to reveal even more health harms from not only direct smoking, but also the deadly consequences of exposure to secondhand smoke.

Since the first Surgeon General's Report in 1964, evidence has linked smoking to diseases of nearly all organs of the body.<sup>1</sup>



Alaska has made great strides over the years to combat this epidemic by committing to a comprehensive tobacco prevention and control program — results indicate a sustained commitment to this effort saves lives and demonstrates a credible return on investment.

Alaska's FY13 Tobacco Prevention and Control Program (TPC) budget of \$11.09 million — or \$15.14 per capita — is shown above relative to the cost of tobacco use in Alaska as well as the state's tobacco-derived revenue. The legislative FY13 appropriation for tobacco prevention education and cessation was \$12,292,700, which included funds for the Enforcement program, Medicaid program and Department of Law.

Sustained comprehensive tobacco prevention and control programs show significant results and, accordingly, equally significant return on investment, justifying their value.

The state's TPC program realized an approximate 25 percent reduction in adult smoking between 1996 (28 percent) and 2012 (21 percent)<sup>5</sup>, or 35,000 fewer adult smokers in 2012.<sup>6</sup> This translates into 10,000 fewer smoking-related deaths, and a \$429 million reduction in health care costs now and in the future.<sup>6</sup>

Investing in tobacco prevention and control pays off in lives and dollars saved. Smokers who quit greatly reduce their risk of developing or dying from a tobacco-related illness<sup>1</sup> and incur an average of \$12,000 less in health-care costs over their lifetimes than those who continue to smoke.<sup>6</sup>

Alaska's high school youth smoking rate has declined 70 percent since 1995 (36.5 percent to 10.6 percent in 2013). The program first saw a significant decline in 2003 (36.5 percent in 1995 to 19 percent), and another significant decline — from 2007 to 2013 (17.8 percent to 10.6 percent) — brought us to 70 percent<sup>7</sup>. This translates into 10,825 fewer youth smokers than in 1995.<sup>8</sup>



# ALASKA YOUTH

## Keeping the promise to our kids

"The brightness of Alaska's future depends on the strength of our children."  
— GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL, STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS 2014

Alaska's vendor sales to youth are at an all-time low, at 4.2 percent in 2013 (preliminary rate), down from a high of 34 percent in 1996<sup>9</sup> — an impressive achievement that demonstrates the effectiveness of the program's enforcement efforts.

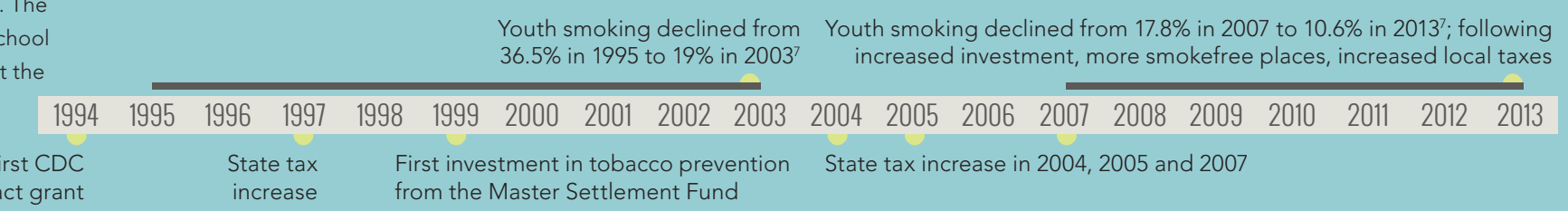
Alaska school districts are partners in this battle, with 20 districts having adopted comprehensive tobacco-free campus policies. The program's community grantees support school districts and school boards as community partners. Tobacco-free environments set the example for youth that tobacco use isn't acceptable in their community.



# 70%

## SMOKING DECLINE IN ALASKA YOUTH SINCE 1995

(36.5% to 10.6% in 2013)<sup>7</sup>

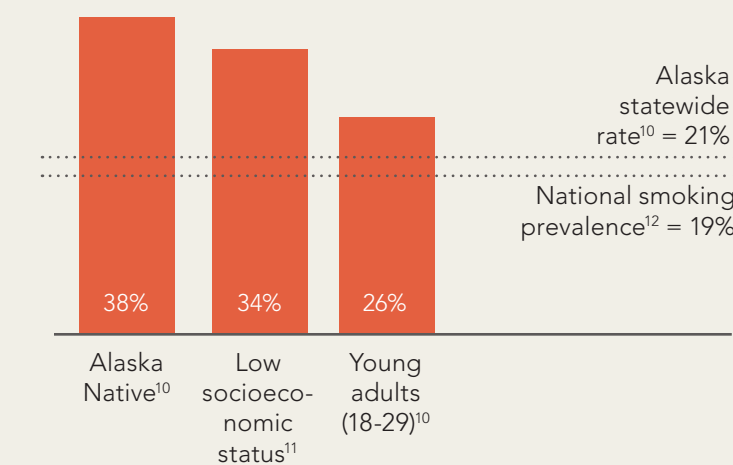


# ACROSS ALASKA

It takes society as a whole to protect our kids and make the next generation tobacco-free. Alaska uses a comprehensive program to enlist partners from all sectors and implement proven public health strategies. This included **38** grantees working in approximately **200** communities.

- Health-care organizations expanded their tobacco-free environments to include all patients, staff and visitors on the entire campus. Providers across the state are being trained to ask about tobacco use at every visit, advising patients to quit, and referring to cessation resources.
- Local tobacco taxes have been raised in several communities — in FY13, Bethel and Mat-Su Borough increased cigarette taxes to \$2.21 and other tobacco products taxed at 45 percent of wholesale price. Increasing the price of all tobacco products is one of the most effective steps to protect our children from becoming tobacco users.
- In an effort to reduce the high Alaska Native adult smoking rate (38 percent in 2012 compared to the all adult smoking rate of 21 percent<sup>10</sup>), the Alaska Federation of Natives and **84** of Alaska's 225 tribes have passed smokefree and tobacco-free resolutions.

Adult smoking rates, select high risk groups, Alaska 2012



- In collaboration with the Leadership for Eliminating Alaskan Disparities (LEAD) workgroup, grantees engage community and tribal leaders, community health networks and advocacy groups to change community expectations around tobacco use and support quit attempts.

# SMOKEFREE AIR

Everyone has the right to breathe clean air

"This isn't something that the industry or anybody can criticize and say, well, it's an individual choice, it's an individual behavior. Secondhand smoke drifts, and it's an equal opportunity killer."  
 — CYNTHIA HALLETT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AMERICANS FOR NONSMOKERS' RIGHTS

Smokefree workplace policies have a profound effect on health. Changing the environment prevents youth from becoming addicted, supports tobacco users in their quit attempts, and protects nonsmokers from secondhand smoke.<sup>1</sup>

Today the vast majority of Alaskans, including those who smoke, agree that<sup>10</sup> ...



And they're going smokefree:

- About 50 percent of Alaska's population is now covered by smokefree workplace laws. Anchorage, Nome and Palmer have the strongest worker protection in the state with 100 percent comprehensive smokefree workplaces. Barrow, Bethel, Dillingham, Haines, Juneau, Klawock, Petersburg, Sitka, Skagway and Unalaska also have smokefree laws on the books.



"The combination of regular and significant increases in tobacco taxes, passage of comprehensive smokefree laws and fully funded tobacco prevention and cessation programs is the most effective way to curb the tobacco epidemic in this country."

— JOHN SEFFRIN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY'S CANCER ACTION NETWORK

# SAVING WITH SMOKEFREE

## Getting the return on investment

A recent study shows a comprehensive smokefree law — making all Alaska workplaces, restaurants and bars 100 percent smokefree — would be expected to produce the following benefits over five years:<sup>13</sup>

**\$520,000**  
State's Medicaid program savings

**\$1.35** Million  
Lung cancer treatment savings

**\$3.69** Million  
Heart attack and stroke treatment savings

# CHALLENGES AHEAD

There has been great success from Alaska's effort, but the tobacco epidemic is far from over. The tobacco industry continues to spend \$18.5 million each year in Alaska<sup>14</sup> and continues to create new products to sustain addiction. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, if current rates continue, 14,000 Alaska kids alive today will die early from smoking.<sup>1</sup>

Alaska must redouble its efforts to get that number to zero. According to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, data from six states demonstrate the need to sustain programs:<sup>15</sup>

- Minnesota experienced an increase in youth smoking risk just months after funding for a key tobacco prevention program component was eliminated.
- California's program experienced funding cuts in 1992 and 2003 — each followed by increased youth risk and cigarette consumption. After three years of youth smoking rate declines, the funding cut in 2003 resulted in an increase in high school student smoking rates. When funding was partially restored, youth and adult smoking rates again began to drop.
- The Massachusetts Tobacco Control Program was an investment that paid off with a 47 percent decline in adult tobacco use and 27 percent drop in youth tobacco use. A drastic funding cut in 2004 resulted in a dramatic increase in sales to youth and an increase in cigarette consumption.
- Equally dramatic results are reported for funding fluctuations in Florida, Washington and Indiana.

Alaska's comprehensive tobacco prevention and control program, fully funded and sustained over time, has proven it can continue to bring about significant declines in tobacco use addiction, eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke in workplaces and public spaces, and realize great economic benefits to Alaska in averted health care costs.

## SOURCES

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