

WHAT STATE SURVEYS TELL US ABOUT TOBACCO USE AMONG ALASKA NATIVES: IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAM PLANNING

This fact sheet highlights findings related to tobacco use among Alaska Native elders – adults over the age of 65. This information is intended to help people who are working to improve the health of Alaska Natives. The information can be used for planning effective programs and educating communities and their leaders about preventing youth from ever starting to use tobacco, helping current users to quit, and decreasing secondhand smoke exposure.

Adult Tobacco Use

Current Cigarette Smoking

- More than one in ten (14%) Alaska Native elders currently smoke cigarettes – fewer than for younger age groups.
- This translates into about 700 Alaska Native elder smokers statewide.

Current Smokeless Tobacco Use

- Very few (1%) Alaska Native elders currently use smokeless tobacco – fewer than for younger age groups.
- This translates into fewer than 100 Alaska Native elder smokeless tobacco users statewide.

Quitting Tobacco Use

* Due to small numbers of survey respondents, we combined people age 55 and older for these measures.

- About one-third (36%) of Alaska Native elders* who smoke say that they tried to quit during the past year – fewer than for younger age groups.
- More than half (57%) of Alaska Native elders* who smoke know about the state's toll-free tobacco Quitline: 888-842-QUIT (7848).

Exposure to Secondhand Smoke

Smoking Exposure at Home - Adults

- Just over one in ten (12%) Alaska Native elders are exposed to secondhand smoke at home.
- This translates into about 700 elders statewide who are exposed to secondhand smoke.

Knowledge and Opinions about Tobacco Control

* Due to small numbers of survey respondents, we combined people age 55 and older for these measures.

- About 84% of Alaska Native elders* believe it is very important to keep stores from selling tobacco to teens; about 82% agree that tobacco use by adults should be banned on school grounds.
- About 40% of Alaska Native elders* believe that there is little benefit to quitting after smoking for 20 years – which is not true.
- About 62% of Alaska Native elders* believe that secondhand smoke is “very harmful.”
- About one-third (33%) of Alaska Native elders* specifically know that exposure to secondhand smoke causes sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and 66% know that it causes heart disease.
- Most Alaska Native elders (76%) support banning smoking in indoor work environments.

More Information about Planning for Tobacco Control

This fact sheet includes highlights from the report *What State Surveys Tell Us about Tobacco Use among Alaska Natives: Implications for Program Planning*. The full report contains information about the health burden of tobacco use among Alaska Natives, trends in tobacco use among Alaska Natives in comparison to non-Native Alaskans, and additional detail about tobacco use indicators such as knowledge of harm, quitting, and opinions about tobacco control programs. Findings in the report are translated into recommendations for program planning.

A full copy of the report, an executive summary and additional fact sheets are available online from the Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program: www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/tobacco



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