

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 men. 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

- Just less than half (46%) of Alaska Native men currently smoke cigarettes.
- This translates into about 16,800 men who smoke.
- Alaska Native men are more likely to smoke cigarettes than women.

Current Smokeless Tobacco Use

- Slightly more than one in ten (14%) Alaska Native men currently use smokeless tobacco.
- This translates into about 5,300 men who use smokeless tobacco.
- Alaska Native men are more likely to use smokeless tobacco than women.
- About 3% of Alaska Native men use Iqmik, a form of homemade smokeless tobacco used only among Alaska Natives; Iqmik use is similar among women.

Youth Tobacco Use

Current Cigarette Smoking

- About 40% of Alaska Native high school boys currently smoke cigarettes.
- This translates into about 1,400 boys smoking statewide.

Current Smokeless Tobacco Use

- About 32% of Alaska Native high school boys currently use smokeless tobacco.
- This translates into about 1,200 boys who use smokeless tobacco statewide.
- Alaska Native boys are more likely to use smokeless tobacco than girls.

Current Cigar Use

- About 7% of Alaska Native high school boys currently use cigars.
- This translates into about 250 boys smoking cigars statewide.

Preventing Tobacco Use

- Almost all (81%) Alaska Native high school boys statewide have smoked at least one cigarette in their lives; one-third (36%) say that they smoked a whole cigarette before the age of 13.
- Among all Alaska Native high school boys, one in ten (13%) smoke cigarettes on school property and one in five (21%) use smokeless tobacco on school property.

Quitting Tobacco Use

- More than half (58%) of Alaska Native men who smoke say that they tried to quit during the past year.
- Almost half (44%) of Alaska Native men who smoke or use smokeless tobacco know about the state's toll-free tobacco Quitline: 888-842-QUIT (7848).

Exposure to Secondhand Smoke

Smoking Exposure at Home - Adults

- About one in seven (15%) Alaska Native men are exposed to secondhand smoke at home.
- This translates into about 5,800 men exposed.

Smoking Exposure Indoors - Youth

- About half (46%) of Alaska Native high school boys statewide report being exposed to secondhand smoke indoors at least weekly.
- This translates into about 1,700 boys who are exposed to secondhand smoke indoors statewide.

Knowledge and Opinions about Tobacco Control

- About 85% of Alaska Native men believe it is very important to keep stores from selling tobacco to teens; about 83% agree that tobacco use by adults should be banned on school grounds.
- About 45% of Alaska Native men believe that there is little benefit to quitting after smoking for 20 years – which is not true.
- About 64% of Alaska Native men believe that secondhand smoke is “very harmful” – significantly less than the 80% among women; 39% of men specifically know that exposure to secondhand smoke causes sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and 71% know that it causes heart disease.
- About 69% of Alaska Native men support banning smoking in all indoor work areas – this is weaker than the 86% support among women.

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

DATA SOURCES: ADULT TOBACCO USE – ALASKA BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTOR SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM (BRFSS), 2004-05 COMBINED; YOUTH TOBACCO USE – 2003 ALASKA YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY (YRBS).

