

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 high school youth. 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.

Youth Tobacco Use

Current Cigarette Smoking

- Just less than half (44%) of Alaska Native high school students currently smoke cigarettes.
- This translates into about 3,400 high school-aged smokers statewide.
- Most Alaska Native high school students who use cigarettes (84%) smoke five or fewer cigarettes per day on the days that they do smoke.
- Among Alaska Native high school students who smoke cigarettes, about one-third (30%) smoke every day.

Current Smokeless Tobacco Use

- About one in four (24%) Alaska Native high school students currently use smokeless tobacco.
- This translates into about 1,900 high school-aged smokeless tobacco users statewide.
- Smokeless tobacco use among Alaska Native high school girls has increased significantly in recent years – despite declines seen among Alaska Native boys, and non-Native boys and girls.

Current Cigar Smoking

- Very few (5%) Alaska Native high school students currently smoke cigars.
- This translates into about 400 high school-aged cigar smokers statewide.

Preventing Tobacco Use

- Almost all (83%) Alaska Native high school students have smoked at least one cigarette in their lives.
- One-third (34%) of all Alaska Native high school students say they smoked a whole cigarette before the age of 13.
- Among Alaska Native high school students who smoke, almost half (44%) smoke cigarettes on school property.
- Among Alaska Native high school students who use smokeless tobacco, the majority (70%) use smokeless tobacco on school property.

Quitting Tobacco Use

- About three quarters (77%) of Alaska Native high school student smokers say that they tried to quit during the past year.

Exposure to Secondhand Smoke

Smoking Exposure Indoors - Youth

- About half (49%) of Alaska Native high school students report being exposed to secondhand smoke indoors at least weekly.
- This translates into about 3,800 youth who are exposed to secondhand smoke indoors statewide.

Smoking Exposure in Vehicles - Youth

- About one-third (36%) of Alaska Native high school students report being exposed to secondhand smoke in vehicles at least weekly.
- This translates into about 2,700 youth who are exposed to secondhand smoke in vehicles statewide.

Knowledge and Opinions about Tobacco Control

- About 86% of Alaska Native adults believe it is very important to keep stores from selling tobacco to teens.
- Similarly, 86% of Alaska Native adults agree that tobacco use by adults should be banned on school grounds.

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

