

Tobacco Use Among Alaskan Adults with Disabilities



Background

Tobacco use is the routine use of the tobacco leaf through smoke inhalation of cigarettes, pipes, cigars, and e-cigarettes or through products that can be chewed or sniffed.¹ Significant disparities exist for adults with disabilities in the area of tobacco use. This fact sheet examines the health disparities in relation to tobacco use for Alaskans with disabilities.

Methods

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a biannual health-related survey conducted by the Alaska Division of Public Health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed the BRFSS and maintains its ongoing use. The most current BRFSS data available are from 2013, which involved phone interviews with more than 4,500 Alaskan adults who answered questions about their health practices and daily living habits. According to the 2013 data, 23.3% of people ages 18 and older in Alaska reported having a disability.

Results

Recent AK BRFSS data indicated that adults with disabilities were more likely to smoke or use smokeless tobacco (29.3%) than adults without a disability (23.9%).² In addition, 63.4% of Alaskans with disabilities who smoked attempted to quit within the previous twelve months, as compared with 57.5% of Alaskans without disabilities.² Similarly, 64.8% of Alaskans with disabilities who were smokeless tobacco users expressed the desire to quit, compared to 57.5% of Alaskans without disabilities.³

Discussion

Alaskans with disabilities are using tobacco at higher rates than Alaskans without disabilities. Approximately 20.0% of all deaths in Alaska are attributable to tobacco use, making it the single most preventable cause of death in Alaska as well as the single most preventable cause of disease and disability.⁴ Many Alaskans with disabilities who use tobacco want to quit. To effectively prevent and reduce tobacco use among Alaskan adults with disabilities, it is important to reduce barriers, such as access to resources and materials related to quitting tobacco use, for people with disabilities.

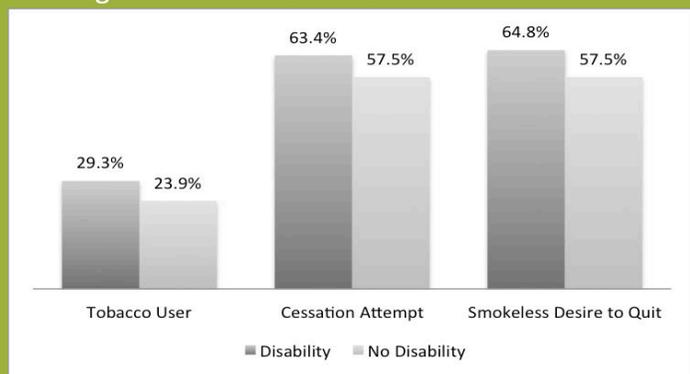
Recommendations:

1. Ensure resources on tobacco use and prevention are accessible and inclusive of people with disabilities.
2. Promote disability education training for people working at the Alaska Tobacco Quit Line or related tobacco cessation programs.
3. Disseminate Quit Line and smoking cessation materials to disability service providers and partners. In Alaska, smoking counseling is available at no cost. Information and resources can be found at: alaskaquitline.com or 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

References:

1. Al-Ibrahim, M.S. & Gross, J.Y. (1990). Clinical methods: The history, physical, and laboratory examinations, 3rd Ed. Boston: Butterworths.
2. Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Center for Health Data and Statistics. BRFSS 2013.
3. Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Center for Health Data and Statistics. BRFSS 2011.
4. State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (2012). Mission 100: Tobacco-Free Alaska. Juneau, AK

Tobacco Use, Cessation Attempt, Desire to Quit Among Adults with Disabilities - AK BRFSS



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