

# EXTINGUISHING THE TOBACCO EPIDEMIC *in* ALASKA

## THE PROBLEM

Cigarette smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death and disability in the United States, despite a significant decline in the number of people who smoke. Over 16 million Americans have at least one disease caused by smoking. This amounts to \$170 billion in direct medical costs that could be saved every year if we could prevent youth from starting to smoke and help every person who smokes to quit.



## ALASKA KEY FACTS

**\$938K**

Was received from CDC for tobacco prevention and control activities in FY 2016

In 2015, **30.9%** of Alaska high school **youth** reported currently using **any tobacco product**, including e cigarettes. Among Alaska high school **youth**, **11.1%** reported currently smoking **cigarettes**.

**19.1%**

Of adults smoked cigarettes in 2015

**600**

Adults die from smoking-related illnesses each year

**\$438M**

Was spent on healthcare costs due to smoking in 2009

## PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO TOBACCO USE IN ALASKA

There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. It causes stroke, lung cancer, and coronary heart disease in adults. Alaska does not have a statewide law protecting people from secondhand smoke in workplaces, restaurants, and bars. However, the state provides research, data and analysis, and scientific consultation to communities, tribes and businesses that want to protect residents from secondhand smoke. As a result, over 40% of Alaska residents are protected by local smoke-free laws that prohibit smoking in all indoor areas of workplaces, restaurants, and bars. Further, 59% (134 of 228) of the Federally recognized tribes in Alaska have adopted smoke-free and tobacco-free policies. The University of Alaska system has a tobacco free policy for all campuses and 10 of 14 public housing authorities are smoke-free, including those in Juneau, Petersburg, and Bristol Bay Borough. Finally, 41 of the state's 54 public school districts have tobacco-free school policies.

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ALASKA



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/tobacco](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco)

## CDC's ROLE IN ADVANCING STATE TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAMS

Alaska is one of 50 states plus DC that receives funding and technical support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to support comprehensive tobacco control efforts and quitlines. The Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) is the lead federal agency for comprehensive tobacco prevention and control. For decades, OSH has led public health efforts to prevent young people from using tobacco and to help all tobacco users to quit.

## CDC's TIPS FROM FORMER SMOKERS™ (Tips™) CAMPAIGN HELPS ALASKA SMOKERS QUIT SMOKING



Despite significant progress, tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death and disease in the US. The good news is that 7 out of 10 smokers want to quit smoking. That is why since 2012 CDC has been educating the public about the consequences of smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke and encouraging smokers to quit through a federally funded, national tobacco education campaign, *Tips From Former Smokers*. The campaign features former smokers suffering from the real consequences of smoking.

The *Tips* campaign connects smokers with resources to help them quit, including a quitline number (1-800-QUIT-NOW) which routes callers to their state quitline. The Alaska quitline provides free cessation services, including counseling and medication. These services are effective in improving health outcomes and reducing healthcare costs.

*"I was thinking about relapsing today and the new commercials came on. It changed my mind real fast. You don't understand the power of these commercials until you have made the decision to quit. Terrie Hall makes me cry every time . . . that could easily be me."*

– Justin: January 2016

Incoming calls to the Alaska state quitline increased by an average **31%** during the 2016 *Tips* campaign. The Campaign generated a total of **2,590** calls to the Alaska state quitline from January 25<sup>th</sup> to June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

## ALASKA TOBACCO PREVENTION & CONTROL PROGRAMS REDUCE HEALTHCARE COSTS

Tobacco prevention and control activities are a public health "best buy." Evidence-based, statewide tobacco control programs that are comprehensive, sustained, and accountable have been shown to reduce the number of people who smoke, as well as tobacco-related diseases and deaths. For every dollar spent on tobacco prevention, states can reduce tobacco-related health care expenditures and hospitalizations by up to \$55. The longer and more states invest, the larger the reductions in youth and adult smoking. A comprehensive statewide tobacco control program includes efforts to:



**1** Prevent initiation of tobacco use especially among youth and young adults



**2** Promote cessation and assist tobacco users to quit



**3** Protect people from secondhand smoke

For more information on tobacco prevention and control, visit [cdc.gov/tobacco](http://cdc.gov/tobacco).

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