

Tobacco Facts

Reducing Tobacco Use Among Underserved Population Groups

March 2008

In Washington, 16.5 percent of adults smoke. Many racial, ethnic, or poor communities have higher smoking rates.

Smoking among American Indians and Alaskan natives is 35 percent, for African Americans is 22 percent, and for Vietnamese and Korean men is greater than 30 percent.

CONTACT:

David Harrelson
Department of Health
PO Box 47848
Olympia, WA 98504
360-236-3685
david.harrelson@doh.wa.gov

Good health for all

Research shows that tobacco use among some population groups is higher than for the general population. These groups often have less access to prevention, treatment, and other resources. These differences result in a disparity or a disproportionate occurrence of tobacco-related death and disease. Eliminating tobacco-related disparities is one of the four central goals of the Department of Health's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program (Tobacco Program).

Strategic planning

The Tobacco Program convened the Cross Cultural Workgroup on Tobacco in April 2001 to identify innovative ways of eliminating tobacco-related disparities. The workgroup included organizations from culturally diverse populations, existing Tobacco Program contractors, and others working to address health disparities. In 2003, the workgroup completed the *Strategic Plan for Identifying and Eliminating Tobacco-Related Health Disparities in Washington State*, based on six critical issues that needed to be addressed to eliminate tobacco-related health disparities:

- Lack of sustained funding.
- Lack of outreach and access to programs and services.
- Low priority of the tobacco issue in high-risk communities.
- Institutional racism.
- Lack of focused resources.
- Tobacco companies' targeting of specific communities.

The plan is a comprehensive framework to guide statewide efforts to improve the health of underserved populations. It identifies strategies needed to prevent and reduce tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure among these groups.

The Cross Cultural Workgroup on Tobacco completed its planning work in September 2004. In January 2005, the Tobacco Program convened the Tobacco Disparities Advisory Committee to guide efforts to implement the strategic plan. Currently, this committee includes members of racial/ethnic and low-income populations, and others with expertise in community competency, policy development, health care, and funding development. The Tobacco Program's current cross-cultural contractors serve on the program's overall advisory

committee to help guide efforts to address disparities.

Ongoing efforts

Since completion of the strategic plan, the Tobacco Program has addressed many of the objectives within the plan, including funding and training contractors in five culturally diverse communities, and improving the appropriateness of its programs, services, materials, advertising, and approaches to specific communities. As the program looks toward the future, it is fully integrating its efforts to identify and eliminate tobacco-related disparities into its new five-year strategic plan.

Evaluation of the plan

The Tobacco Program continues to evaluate the implementation of *The Strategic Plan for Identifying and Eliminating Tobacco-Related Health Disparities in Washington State* to ensure activities achieve desired outcomes. Although the Tobacco Program has improved its surveys, materials, and activities to try reach people of different cultures and languages, there is more to do.

A comprehensive approach to fighting tobacco use

Research shows that tobacco prevention programs must conduct a comprehensive set of strategies to be effective. The Washington State Tobacco Prevention and Control Program provides services to help people quit, conducts public awareness and media campaigns, supports local programs in communities and schools, supports enforcement of policies to keep kids from accessing tobacco products, and evaluates the effectiveness of program ac

- Tobacco Disparities
Advisory Committee
- American Lung Association
- Center for Multicultural
Health
- Fred Hutchinson Cancer
Research Center - Cancer
Information Service
- Latino Health Network
Northwest
- Mary Mahoney Nurses
Association
- My Service Mind
- Northwest Communities
Education Center/
KDNA Radio
- Northwest Portland Area
Indian Health Board
- Private citizen
- Verbena
- Washington Health
Foundation
- Washington Asian Pacific
Islander Coalition Against
Tobacco

For more information on
tobacco prevention:
doh.wa.gov/tobacco