



Capital District
Tobacco-Free
Communities



ST PETER'S HEALTH
PARTNERS

Community Health Programs

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Local tobacco control programs educate state lawmakers about notable progress and disparities in tobacco use

While New York State average smoking rates are at all-time lows, rates remain high among certain population groups.

(ALBANY, N.Y. March 15, 2022)- Capital District Tobacco-Free Communities and St. Peter's Health Partners Community Health Programs recently met with state lawmakers to discuss how tobacco control efforts have helped decrease state smoking rates to historic lows. However, those with less income, less education or poor mental health are still smoking at high rates. E-cigarette use among young people also continues to be a concern.

The state's average adult and high school-age smoking rates have dropped to their lowest in recorded history, 12% and 2.4% respectively.ⁱ At the same time, throughout New York state, smoking rates are highest among adults who report frequent mental distress at 27.7%; adults with less than a high school education at 21.5%; and adults with an annual household income of less than \$25,000 at 20.4%.ⁱⁱ E-cigarette use among New York's high school-age youth is dangerously high at 22.5%, as well.ⁱⁱⁱ

"Our policy-driven tobacco control efforts have definitely lowered the overall smoking rates in New York state, but there are health inequities that need to be addressed. Individuals with less income and those with behavioral health issues are still smoking at rates almost two times the general population, and more than 1 in 5 high school students are vaping," said Judy Rightmyer, Director, Capital District Tobacco-Free Communities.

"Each part of the tobacco control program in New York state plays an important role in helping to reduce these numbers and make New York a tobacco free state. The work of our partners helps to encourage smokers to quit, and our work gives the healthcare field the tools to help them succeed," said Erin Sinisgalli, Director, Community Health Programs.

The New York State Tobacco Control Program has contributed substantially to the drop in tobacco use rates through policy-driven, cost effective and evidence-based approaches. These approaches are now further focused on communities and populations with high tobacco use rates.

E-cigarette Use/Vaping Plagues High School-Age Youth

When New York state ended the sale of flavored e-cigarettes statewide in May 2020, it was a significant step toward reducing youth tobacco use. However, e-cigarettes remain the most used tobacco product among youth at 22.5%.ⁱⁱⁱ More than half of teens falsely believe e-cigarettes are harmless.^{iv} However,

research shows youth who use e-cigarettes are four times more likely to start smoking conventional cigarettes than their peers who do not vape. And, nicotine exposure can cause addiction and prime the adolescent brain for other addictions, including opioid addiction.^v

“We know that tobacco industry marketing of flavors attracts youth to e-cigarettes and other tobacco products. Flavored tobacco products are what get young people to start; nicotine is what keeps them addicted,” said Cara Zampi, Youth Engagement Coordinator, Capital District Tobacco-Free Communities.

The Costs of Tobacco Use in New York State

Each year, 22,000 New Yorkers die due to smoking, and thousands more live with illnesses related to tobacco use.^{vi,vii} Addressing tobacco use remains as important as ever given that smokers and former smokers are at increased risk of developing severe illness if they get COVID-19.^{viii}

In New York state, annual health care costs directly caused by smoking are estimated to be \$9.7 billion,^{vi} a tax burden of \$937 for each household every year.^{ix} To combat the deadly impact of smoking, the CDC recommends a \$203 million annual investment in New York State’s Tobacco Control Program; the state’s investment is \$39 million.^x

Support Available for New Yorkers Who Want to Quit

“No matter how long you’ve been smoking, quitting can drastically improve your health immediately and over the long-term,” added Sinisgalli.

For help quitting smoking or vaping, including free nicotine replacement therapy for eligible residents, individuals can contact a health care provider, and call the New York State Smokers’ Quitline at 1-866-NY-QUITS or visit: nysmokefree.com. The Quitline’s highly trained team members provide coaching seven days a week and empower tobacco users to set a quit-date and develop a quit-plan. Effective medications and counseling are covered by Medicaid and most insurance programs.

About Capital District Tobacco-Free Communities: Capital District Tobacco-Free Communities (CDTFC) is a NYS Bureau of Tobacco Control grant-funded program held by St. Peter’s Health Partners. CDTFC works to increase support for New York state’s tobacco-free norm through youth action and community engagement. Efforts are evidence-based, policy-driven, and cost-effective approaches that decrease youth tobacco use, motivate adult smokers to quit, and eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke. Visit www.smokefreecapital.org for more information.

About Community Health Programs: Community Health Programs, a division of St. Peter’s Health St. Peter’s Health Partners, works with healthcare providers, school districts, businesses, public health stakeholders and communities to improve the health and well-being of patients and community members. Through several grant-funded initiatives, we offer programs that encourage healthy eating habits, improved physical fitness, provide breastfeeding support, and offer tobacco dependence treatment. Visit healthprograms.org for more information.

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health. BRFSS Prevalence & Trends Data [online]. 2015. [accessed Mar 02, 2022]. URL: <https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/>.

ⁱⁱ NYS Dept. of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, BRFSS Brief No. 1802, Cigarette Smoking New York State Adults, 2016. https://health.ny.gov/statistics/brfss/reports/docs/1802_brfss_smoking.pdf (accessed 02/08/22).

ⁱⁱⁱ NYS Dept. of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, BRFSS Brief No. 1802, Cigarette Smoking New York State Adults, 2016. https://health.ny.gov/statistics/brfss/reports/docs/1802_brfss_smoking.pdf (accessed 02/08/2022)

^{iv} NYS Dept. of Health, Tobacco Control Program, Get the Facts, E-Cigarettes and Similar Vapor Products. https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/tobacco_control/campaign/e-cigarettes/ (accessed 02/08/22)

^v Food and Drug Administration. Oct. 12, 2021. "FDA Permits Marketing of E-Cigarette Products, Marking First Authorization of Its Kind by the Agency." <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-permits-marketing-e-cigarette-products-marking-first-authorization-its-kind-agency> (accessed 02/08/2022)

^{vi} Research Triangle Institute, [The Health and Economic Burden of Smoking in New York, November 2020 RTI Tobacco Report1 Economic Burden.pdf \(ny.gov\)](#) (Accessed 01/07/22)

^{vii} New York State Department of Health, [Smoking and Disease](#) (ny.gov) (Accessed 01/07/2022)

^{viii} Centers for Disease Control; People with Certain Medical Conditions. Smoking, current or former. Updated Dec. 14, 2021 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html> (accessed 02/02/2022)

^{ix} Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/new_york (accessed 01/07/2022)

^x Centers for Disease Control; Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs; Section C; Recommended Funding Levels, by State: New York Page 110; https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best_practices/pdfs/2014/comprehensive.pdf