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New York State Adult Smoking Rate Falls Below 10% for First Time

Federal funding cuts could undermine future success

(Albany, NY) August 4, 2025 – The New York State Department of Health released an updated report, [Cigarette Smoking New York State Adults, 2023](#), which cites that the prevalence of cigarette smoking among New York State adults in 2023 was 9.3%, marking the first time the rate has dropped below 10% since smoking rate surveillance began. Federal funding cuts, however, could undermine future efforts to help New Yorkers live free from smoking-related disease and death.

When the New York State Tobacco Control Program (NYS TCP) was established as part of the [Master Settlement Agreement](#) in 2000, the adult smoking rate in New York was 23.2% or approximately 3.3 million adults. In other words, nearly 1 in 4 New York State adults smoked cigarettes in 2000, compared to less than 1 in 10 in 2023.

“This is reason to celebrate as cigarette smoking is a leading cause of preventable death and disease in our state,” said Jeanie Orr, Director of Capital District Tobacco-Free Communities. “Unfortunately, there is real concern that the progress made over the past quarter century will be more difficult to sustain because of federal program and funding cuts.”

When the Office on Smoking and Health at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention was eliminated on April 1, the NYS TCP was directly impacted with 13 staff members losing their federally funded positions, including members of the research and evaluation team and those overseeing local community programs.

Since its inception 25 years ago, the NYS TCP has been using an evidence-based approach to help smokers quit, prevent youth tobacco use initiation and reduce exposure to secondhand smoke. Through implementing both statewide and community interventions,

the comprehensive program has been associated with averting more than 2,000 deaths per year and saving billions of dollars each year. According to a study published in 2024, for every \$1 invested in the NYS Tobacco Control Program, New York achieves a \$15 reduction in smoking-related health care costs.¹

“This is no time to scale back tobacco control efforts,” continued Jeanie Orr. “While it is great news that the overall adult smoking rate has declined to a historic low, certain populations continue to struggle with smoking. And while young people are smoking cigarettes at very low rates, e-cigarettes and new emerging products continue to addict a new generation to nicotine.”

The 2023 report notes that smoking rates remained highest among:

- Adults with less than a high school education (19.1%)
- Adults with an annual household income of less than \$25,000 (16.6%)
- Adults without health insurance (15.3%)
- Adults enrolled in Medicaid (15.2%)
- Adults living with disability (14.4%)
- Adults who report experiencing frequent mental distress (14.2%)

[The New York State Youth Tobacco Survey](#) notes that in 2022 among New York high school students:

- 21.1% reported using tobacco products
- 18.7% reported vaping
- 2.1 % reported smoking cigarettes

Additional tobacco control data products can be found on the New York State Department’s Public Website:

Tobacco-Related Reports:

https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/tobacco_control/reports.htm

Additional BRFSS briefs are available on the Department’s Public Website:

<https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/brfss/reports/index.htm>

About Capital District Tobacco-Free Communities: Capital District Tobacco-Free Communities (CDTFC) is a NYS Bureau of Tobacco Control grant-funded program held by

¹ Nonnemaker J, Mann N, MacMonegle AJ, et al. (2024) Estimating the return on investment of the New York Tobacco Control Programme: a synthetic control study. *BMJ Open* 2024, 14 e080525. Doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2023. https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/14/4/e080525

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.

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