



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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TOBACCO CONTROL EFFORTS SHOW POSITIVE RESULTS

HONOLULU — A new study shows Hawaii adults are smoking significantly less than the rest of the nation. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) today released figures showing an overall decline in smoking and tobacco use among Americans and ranked Hawaii third best in the nation for smoking prevalence, behind Utah and California. The results are released in an article entitled, "Cigarette Smoking Among Adults – United States, 2003 in the CDC Journal, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

The 2003 National Health Interview Survey reports the country's adults had a 21.6 percent smoking prevalence (just over one in five adults were smokers in 2003). In Hawaii, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) data showed that in 2003, 17.2 percent of adult residents smoked.

Health Director Chiyome Fukino, M.D. said, "Hawaii's efforts to develop and implement effective tobacco prevention and control initiatives are beginning to show impressive results." She also said, "Our successful reductions in adult and youth smoking can be attributed to Hawaii's comprehensive tobacco prevention and control program, supportive state and county laws, broad-based community activity and appropriate use of the Master Tobacco Settlement dollars, along with a strong belief in Hawaii as a healthy place to live."

Hawaii has experienced the lowest rates of adult smoking in 10 years. Population groups making significant progress were the 18 – 24 year olds whose smoking rates have dropped from 30.3 percent in 2002 to 22.3 percent in 2003. Smoking rates of Native Hawaiians and part-Hawaiians also declined from 33.8 percent in 2002 to 25.8 percent in 2003; male smokers went from 26.1 percent to 20 percent in the same years; and smoking rates on the neighbor islands came down to those on Oahu.

Youth smoking rates also showed impressive declines between 2002 and 2003. There was a 40 percent drop in high school smoking and a 60 percent drop in smoking among middle schoolers as measured from the 2003 Youth Tobacco Survey.

(more)

Despite these gains those still at-risk include populations with lower levels of education and income, Native Hawaiians, Filipino males, those unemployed, and those who are not married.

The Department of Health's *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS)* and *Youth Tobacco Survey* are available at www.hawaii.gov. The CDC journal, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* is available at www.cdc.gov.

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