



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

Chiyome Leinaala Fukino
Phone: (808) 586-4010
Fax: (808) 586-4444

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**NEW STUDY SHOWS STATE ANTI-TOBACCO ADS
REDUCE YOUTH SMOKING**

A new peer-reviewed study published in the July issue of the journal *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* provides compelling new evidence that state-sponsored anti-tobacco advertising works to prevent kids from smoking and change their attitudes toward tobacco.

The study involved more than 51,000 students in the 75 largest U.S. media markets. It found that youth exposed to state anti-tobacco ads are less likely to smoke, think they will smoke in the future or believe their friends smoke and are more likely to perceive that smoking is addictive and harmful. The study controlled for other influences on smoking behavior such as cigarette prices, public smoking restrictions and other tobacco-related advertising.

Health Director Chiyome Leinaala Fukino, MD stated, "the study further demonstrates why tobacco settlement dollars are needed to continue building Hawaii's comprehensive tobacco prevention and control program, which includes anti-smoking ads like those in the study....Hawaii's aggressive counter-marketing campaigns are an effective investment that are showing promise in reducing youth smoking that will eventually save lives and reduce smoking-related healthcare costs."

Comprehensive tobacco control efforts have dramatically reduced smoking among Hawaii's youth. The 2003 Hawaii Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) showed an almost 60 percent reduction in smoking among middle school students and an almost 40 percent reduction in smoking among high school students from spring 2000 to fall 2003. In the 2003 report, only 5.3 percent of middle school and 14.9 high school students reported smoking during the last 30 days.

Hawaii's comprehensive tobacco prevention and cessation program includes public awareness media campaigns, school and community education programs, enforcement of laws regarding tobacco sales to minors, and programs to help smokers quit. Hawaii has further been successful in enacting other proven strategies such as high tobacco taxes and smoke-free workplace laws.

The new study used Nielsen television ratings data to measure the exposure of 12-17 year olds to anti-tobacco advertising in the 75 largest media markets. Researchers merged this information with data from the government's annual Monitoring the Future survey, which measures youth smoking rates and attitudes. They found that students from media markets with higher exposure to state-sponsored anti-tobacco ads were significantly less likely to have smoked in the past 30 days than students from markets with no or lower exposure. Additionally, students who had greater exposure to state-sponsored anti-

tobacco ads were significantly less likely to report that their friends were smokers, were more likely to perceive the harms of smoking, and were more likely to report that they definitely would not be smoking in five years.

The study was conducted by researchers from Bridging the Gap, a policy research program based at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and the University of Michigan. The National Cancer Institute, the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation funded the study.

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in Hawaii, claiming close to 1,000 lives each year, 16 percent of resident deaths, and costing \$525 million annually in health care bills and lost productivity.

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For more information, contact:
Julian Lipsher
Hawaii State Department of Health
Phone: (808) 586-4662