

New York**Reducing the Health Impact of Tobacco Use****Public Health Problem**

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in New York state, killing an estimated 25,500 people each year. In an effort to effect measurable impact in reducing the health impact of tobacco use, the state needed a comprehensive, evidence-based tobacco control program.

Program Example

New York established a comprehensive, aggressive, and effective tobacco control program built on a foundation of community partnerships throughout the state that utilized evidence-based strategies from CDC's *Guide to Community Preventive Services*. OSH provided guidance to New York, helping initiate program efforts with a workshop on *Community Guide* recommendations and through continued consultation. Over the past seven years, the program has successfully implemented strong smoke-free legislation, maintained support for taxes to keep the price of tobacco high, worked to increase access to effective cessation services and motivate smokers to quit, and worked to change social norms around tobacco use in the community. Currently funded at approximately \$85.5 million (New York had been funded at about \$40 million annually from state and federal sources for its first five years), the program has published four evaluation reports that monitor progress and provide recommendations for strengthening impact.

Highlights of program contributions include the following:

- Implementing the *Public Health Guidelines* on treating tobacco use, New York established 19 cessation centers in 2005 to engage health care organizations in systems changes and refer patients to the state's quitline. During the first half of 2007, the New York state smokers quitline managed a call volume of more than 96,000 calls.
- New York City reported in the June 22, 2007, issue of the *MMWR*, significant decreases in adult smoking prevalence among men and Hispanics in conjunction with a television-based media campaign that used graphic imagery to illustrate the health effects of smoking. The campaign was implemented within the context of comprehensive, sustained, evidence-based state and local tobacco control programs.
- The state's Tobacco Control Program and the New York State Fair worked together to ban tobacco company sponsorship and advertising at the 2007 State Fair.
- Youth engaged in the state's "Reality Check" program were involved in removing tobacco advertisements from four key magazines most commonly found in school libraries.

Implications and Impact

The program's ambitious goal of one million fewer smokers by 2010 has been adopted as an agency priority endorsed by the governor. To share results and contribute to the science of tobacco control, the program's staff published three studies in *Tobacco Control*, the *American Journal of Public Health*, and *MMWR* in 2007 based on New York's tobacco control work.

As a result of these sustained and evidence-based programmatic efforts, New York's youth and adult smoking rates are at their lowest levels on record—18.2% for adults and 16.3% for high school students. Adult smoking rates are declining faster in New York than in the rest of the nation, where overall prevalence numbers appear to have stalled.