



APPEAL

Asian American and Pacific Islander Youth and Tobacco

Every day, more than 3,000 kids in the United States become new, regular daily smokers. Roughly one-third of them will die prematurely from smoking-related illnesses. What is the first thing that you can do to put a stop to this? Educate yourself! Then, educate your loved ones, your community, and your local, regional and national policy makers about why we need to be concerned about tobacco's impact on Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) youth. The following information is a great starting place!

- The smoking rate for Asian Americans increases seven-fold from middle school (4.4 %) to high school (33.1%), the highest increase for any ethnic group.
- The Asian American and Pacific Islander community has been a target market of the tobacco industry since the early 80's. According to internal industry documents, the tobacco industry has conducted extensive research on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to determine effective ways of getting advertising messages across to these communities.
- More than 25% of female Hawaiian/Pacific Islander youth smoke during middle school. This is almost twice the smoking rate for Hawaiian/Pacific Islander middle school males (16%) and five times the overall smoking rate for Asian American middle school youth (5.5%).
- The use of menthol cigarettes among Asian Americans (62%) is second only to African Americans (76%) in high school.
- Teens make up 90% of all new smokers.
- The tobacco industry loses an estimated 440,000 customers each year from deaths caused by tobacco-related illnesses. To make up for this loss of consumer buying power, the tobacco industry spends millions of dollars on sophisticated marketing campaigns to make smoking cigarettes more appealing to youth.

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- From 1991 to 1999, smoking among high school girls increased from 27% to 34.9%. This dramatic increase in prevalence has been attributed to the launching of products and advertising campaigns aimed at women and girls.
- A 1993 study in San Diego, California found that the highest average number of tobacco displays was found in Asian American stores in comparison to Hispanic and African American stores. This is another example of how much thought the tobacco industry has put into targeting the AAPI community. Even though the tobacco industry knows that it is illegal to sell tobacco to minors, they pay extra advertising fees for stores to post tobacco advertisements at a child's eye level and in the same areas where candy is sold.

¹ American Legacy Foundation. National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS, 2000)

² Appleyard J, Messeri P, Haviland ML. Smoking Among Asian American and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Youth: New Data from the 2000 National Youth Tobacco Survey. *Critical Research and Data Issues on Tobacco Use, Prevention, and Control for Asian Americans and Pacific Islander: A Compendium of Scientific Articles. Asian American and Pacific Islander Journal of Health, Winter-Spring 2001; (9)1: 6-14.*

³ CDC. "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 1999," *MMWR*, 9 June 2000, Vol. 49, No. SS-5.

⁴ Elder J. et al. Independent Evaluation of Proposition 99-Funded Efforts to Prevent and Control Tobacco Use in California (draft annual report). San Diego State University, Graduate School of Public Health. Submitted to the California Department of Health Services, Tobacco Control Section, 1993.