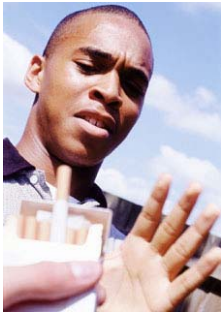


Highlights in Tobacco Control

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Practical Ideas Online

Trends in Youth Cigarette Use



This issue focuses on changes in youth smoking rates between 2000 and 2004. The bottom line is, **youth smoking for middle school and high school students in the comprehensive program area decreased at a rate over four times that of the state rate.**

At the middle school level, for example, there was a 21.7 percent drop in the rate of cigarette smoking in the Beaumont/Port Arthur comprehensive program area while statewide, middle school youth smoking rates rose by 2 percent. Current cigarette use among

Beaumont/Port Arthur high school students dropped 41.5 percent for the same time period, while smoking among high school students statewide decreased by only 9.3 percent. The attached fact sheet provides more detail.

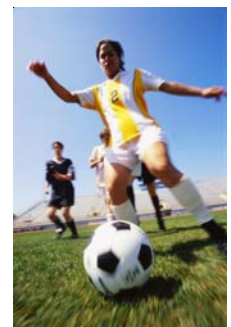


The data confirm the success of the comprehensive approach and the continuing need to reduce smoking rates throughout the state. This issue includes tips and tools for helping you use this information to make a positive impact on tobacco prevention efforts in your area.

Practical Ideas: Turning Information into Action

Here's how you can use the fact sheet and media tips included in this issue to make a local impact:

Schools/Youth Organizations: Schedule presentations for parent-teacher organization meetings. Plan activities for youth groups and after-school programs, such as Boys and Girls Clubs or the YMCA. Meet with youth sports associations.



Clinics/health care resources: Schedule visits and take information packets to school nurses, doctors, family counseling practices, and community health and wellness programs. Make presentations to asthma education groups, parenting classes, or support groups.



Media: Encourage local television and radio stations to play tobacco enforcement PSAs. (See information about the current media buy in this issue.) For copies of the current ads, contact Darah Waldrip at the Texas Department of State Health Services at 512/458-7111 ext. 3294. Work with schools to pitch story ideas about youth tobacco prevention to coincide with the start of the school year.



Dear Dr. Phil,
What kinds of conclusions can we draw from the most recent data about current trends in youth tobacco use? Why is this important?

The most recent studies confirm that a full-fledged, comprehensive approach in tobacco prevention, cessation and enforcement programs is the most effective in reducing tobacco use among youth. Our studies show that smoking among high school students dropped from 34.2 percent in 2000 to 20 percent in 2004 (a 41.5 percent decrease) in the Beaumont/Port Arthur comprehensive program area, while rates among high school students statewide decreased from 24.7 percent in 2001 to 22.4 percent in 2004 (a 9.3 percent decrease). Beaumont/Port Arthur middle school students' cigarette smoking went from 17 percent in 2000 to 13.3 percent in 2004 (a 21.7 percent decrease), while statewide middle school students' rates increased from 10.2 percent in 2001 to 10.4 percent in 2004 (a 2 percent increase). Clearly, we are making greater progress in the comprehensive program area. This information is important in planning our future prevention activities.



Dr. Phil Huang, Medical Director,
Texas Department of State Health
Services

Quick Media Tips

Try some of these tips for working with your local media to get the tobacco prevention message to the public:

1. Send reporters a quarterly calendar of events highlighting your local activities or major health events, such as the Great American Smokeout.
2. Give a local community affairs show host a list of topics you can speak about on short notice if they need a stand-by guest.
3. Put the local media on your agency's newsletter mailing list (if it's appropriate for an external audience).
4. Keep your media list up-to-date. Contact new reporters to introduce yourself and explain what you do.
5. Submit articles to your partners' newsletters, community magazines, etc.



Enforcement Media Buy

New public service announcements focusing on tobacco law enforcement will run in several markets throughout the state this summer. One television spot and a radio spot are targeted toward adults, and an additional radio spot is focused on teens. The media buy will include Tyler/

Longview, Odessa/Midland, Harlingen, and Beaumont/Port Arthur (adult radio only). The spots will run through most of July and August.

Please mention and promote the spots to your contacts as appropriate. Contact Darah Waldrip at 512/458-7111 ext. 3294 for more information.

2000 - 2004 Trends Texas Youth Cigarette Use

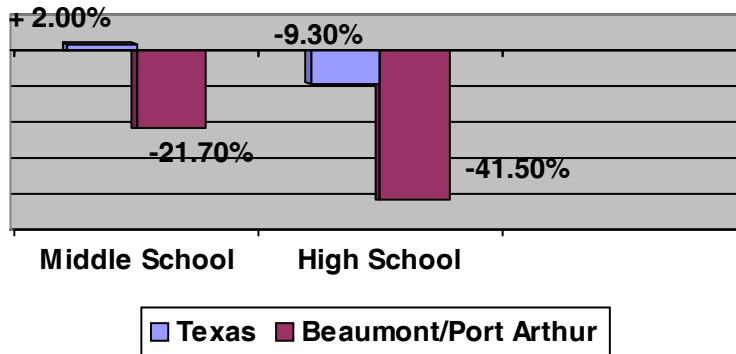
FACT: Between 2000 and 2004, cigarette use among middle school and high school youth in the Beaumont/Port Arthur comprehensive program area decreased at more than four times the state rate. ¹

FACT: Statewide, Texas youth cigarette use increased among middle school youth and decreased only slightly at the high school level between 2001 and 2004.²

FACT: Comprehensive community-based tobacco use prevention and control programs are effective in reducing youth cigarette use.³

Comprehensive programs include school-based interventions, enforcement of laws pertaining to youth tobacco use and clean indoor air ordinances, community and tobacco use cessation activities and targeted mass media campaigns.

Percent Change in Current Cigarette Use 2000 - 2004



Data behind the numbers:

In Beaumont/Port Arthur, current cigarette use among middle school students went from 17 percent in 2000 to 13.3 percent in 2004 (a 21.7 percent decrease) and current cigarette use among high school students went from 34.2 percent in 2000 to 20 percent in 2004 (a 41.5 percent decrease).

In the entire state, current cigarette use among middle school students went from 10.2 percent in 2001 to 10.4 percent in 2004 (a 2 percent increase) and current cigarette use among high school students went from 24.7 percent in 2001 to 22.4 percent in 2004 (a 9.3 percent decrease).

Why is this information important?

- Almost 90 percent of adult smokers start smoking before age 19. ⁴
- Smoking attributable illnesses continue to be the leading cause of death in Texas – much higher than deaths due to AIDS, heroin, cocaine, alcohol, car accidents, fire and murder combined. ⁵

References

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