

**Texans and Tobacco:
Report to the 80th Texas Legislature
(As mandated by Texas Health & Safety Code §161.0901)**

Executive Summary

Tobacco use in Texas among adults and youth, though currently in decline, remains a serious public health problem, contributing to or causing many preventable illnesses and deaths. This report details the steps that the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is taking to reduce and eliminate tobacco use statewide, presents statistical data on current and historic use, and outlines the progress of various programs to date.

Current Adult Tobacco Use

According to 2005 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and DSHS, approximately 20% (3,271,873) of adult Texans smoke tobacco. This figure represents a decline from the 1993 and 1995 highs of 23.7% and from the 1990-2003 average of 22%.

National statistics, statistics for specific population subgroups, racial/ethnic groups, and other socioeconomic data are available.

Current Youth Tobacco Use

Two biennial surveys, the Texas School Survey of Substance Abuse Among Youth and the Youth Tobacco Survey, measure youth tobacco use, collectively polling students in grades 4-12. Statistical evidence demonstrates that public health activities have a positive impact on the rates of underage tobacco use in Texas.

The Texas Tobacco Prevention Initiative, funded by the Texas Tobacco Settlement, is active in Beaumont/Port Arthur in Southeast Texas, a location chosen because of the relatively high rate of tobacco use among adults and youth. A comprehensive approach that includes school/community interventions, cessation programs, law enforcement, intensive media campaigns, surveillance/evaluation and a statewide infrastructure appears to be most effective model for tobacco prevention and control, as demonstrated by the statistical results of this initiative. For example, in Beaumont/Port Arthur, current use of any tobacco by middle school students declined to 14.3% in 2006 from 21.3% in 2003, while current use of any tobacco by middle school students in Houston and the surrounding area rose from 14.8% in 2003 to 17.0% in 2006. Similar increases were observed statewide.

Retail Cigarette and Tobacco Sales to Minors

Federal Synar Amendment legislation requires annual, random inspections of tobacco retailers to ensure that 20% or fewer retailers are in violation of tobacco laws. In Texas, the Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA) works in partnership with local law enforcement agencies to educate the public and to measure and enforce compliance. For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2007, Texas' sales-to-minors rate was 7.2%, a dramatic decrease since the 1998 high of 24%. An increase in CPA funding for local enforcement and increased retailer education provided by DSHS-funded Prevention Resource Centers, as well as enhanced licensing programs, improved community education, targeted media campaigns, the Texas Tobacco Prevention Hotline, and better interagency cooperation are credited with this reduction in illegal tobacco sales to minors.

Prevention and Cessation Activities

Tobacco prevention and control activities are guided by goals and objectives that were developed through a statewide strategic planning process that included regional and local stakeholders and partners. Regional staff infrastructure is provided by DSHS to meet the needs of Texans at the local level. There

are DSHS tobacco program coordinators in eight Health Service Regions. Eleven (11) Prevention Resource Center tobacco specialists provide services in the counties of each of the 11 Health and Human Service regions.

Program goals include preventing initiation of tobacco use, increasing cessation of tobacco use by youth and adults, eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke in public places, and eliminating disparities among diverse and special populations. Current paid media campaigns addressing each of these goals are summarized below.

Prevention of youth tobacco initiation is addressed in a comprehensive approach aimed at schools and communities. DSHS staff, community contractors, the American Cancer Society, and other voluntary agencies work together to provide school-based and community-based education and outreach, as well as the education of local decision-makers. Special efforts are made to increase youth participation in tobacco control activities at the state and local level.

Cessation efforts educate the public and encourage health care providers to take a more active role in promoting patient cessation. The development and dissemination of the *Yes You Can* Cessation Tool Kit, which promotes changes in clinical practice regarding tobacco assessment and referrals to appropriate counseling and resources, is directly linked to the *Yes You Can* media campaign. All *Yes You Can* materials promote the American Cancer Society Quitline, a free, confidential telephone counseling service available to all Texans who want to quit tobacco.

Eliminating Exposure to Secondhand Smoke

DSHS staff works with community contractors and local community groups to educate the public about the health effects of secondhand smoke. Education targets students, parents, faith communities, local governments, and employers. The University of Houston, under contract with DSHS, maintains a database of municipal clean air ordinances that provides current information on local secondhand smoke policies. This data is useful for decision-makers who need detailed facts about public policies throughout the state.

Laws increasingly restrict the act of smoking. Following several successful municipal smoking bans, beginning January 1, 2007, Texas law restricts smoking in foster parents' homes at all times and in cars when children are present.

Eliminating Health Disparities Related to Tobacco Use

All communities do not share the burden of tobacco equally. For example, while current cigarette use is typically high among both white (21.9%) and black (25%) males, the death rate due to lung cancer among white males (79.5 per 100,000) is much lower than among black males (104.1 per 100,000). Smoking rates tend to be much higher in rural communities than in metropolitan areas. Also, smoking rates and the disease burden are higher among adults with low incomes and education than among those with higher levels of income and education.

To reach populations affected by tobacco-related health disparities that are also targeted by tobacco marketing and promotion, DSHS, using Texas Tobacco Settlement funds, contracts with several community agencies to address these specific populations in the Houston and Beaumont/Port Arthur areas. In addition, all tobacco settlement community contractors are required to focus at least one third of their efforts on addressing tobacco-related health disparities.

Reducing Tobacco Use through Taxation

Effective January 1, 2007, the state tax on cigarettes will increase by \$1 to \$1.41 per pack. Increases in the real price of cigarettes significantly reduce cigarette smoking, and young people are usually more sensitive than adults are to such price changes. The American Cancer Society predicts that the increase

will help persuade approximately 143,300 adult Texans to give up the habit, while dissuading approximately 284,000 young Texans from ever lighting up.

Paid Media Activities

DUCK – Tobacco is Foul

This campaign aims to reach 9-12 year olds through outreach activities; a Web site; and television, radio, Internet, and theater advertisements. The goal of the campaign is to prevent youth from experimenting with tobacco and to motivate those who are already experimenting to quit. Messages emphasize tobacco's negative consequences on appearance, social life and health. Some materials are available in Spanish. Due to funding limitations, the paid media campaign reaches only the target area of Beaumont/Port Arthur, with supplemental activities in the nearby counties of Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery.

WorthIt?

The *WorthIt?* campaign targets teenagers 13-17, with a secondary audience of adults. *Worth It?* presents the facts about tobacco use and its consequences and challenges teens to decide for themselves. The campaign, developed in response to the 1997 Texas Tobacco Law resulting from Senate Bill 55 (SB 55), includes television, radio, mall, and theater advertising placements, some of which are in Spanish. Paid media activities are limited to Beaumont/Port Arthur, with supplemental activities in nearby Harris, Fort Bend, and Montgomery counties. A companion campaign called "Enforcing it is Easy" targets tobacco retailers, parents, and other Texas adults, reminding them of their responsibilities under the Texas Tobacco Law, which prohibits the sale or distribution of tobacco products to minors. Paid media markets are determined each year. FY2006 markets included Abilene, Corpus Christi, Lubbock, Tyler, and Waco.

Yes You Can!;/¡Sí Se Puede!

This statewide campaign encourages Texas adults to take the first steps to quit tobacco by seeking the support and information they need through family, health care providers, and the American Cancer Society's toll-free Quitline. Adult, blue-collar males, the group with the highest rate of tobacco use in Texas, comprise the target audience, but the message is applicable and appealing to all smokers who wish to quit. This campaign includes television, radio, print, and outdoor advertising, with some ads available in Spanish. Ads are placed each year in Beaumont/Port Arthur, with supplemental ads in Harris County and additional placements throughout the state as funds permit. The American Cancer Society Quitline call volume exceeded the DSHS contract amount in FY2006, an expense absorbed by the American Cancer Society. The increased call volume was attributed to the *Yes You Can!* campaign, as well as national media focus on cessation and the implementation of several comprehensive smoking ordinances in Texas cities.

Mi Familia No Fuma

The *Mi Familia No Fuma* campaign is directed at the 7.9 million Texans of Hispanic origin, who are the targets of aggressive tobacco advertising and marketing. The *Mi Familia No Fuma* campaign seeks to offset these efforts, using Spanish-language television ads, billboards, in-store posters, theater slides, transit ads, brochures, Quitline cards, and other printed materials that educate Hispanic families about tobacco prevention. Outreach activities with local churches and community groups are an integral part of the campaign. Paid advertising and outreach activities are conducted in the Tobacco Initiative target area, Beaumont/Port Arthur, and materials are made available to areas across the state. In FY2006, the program Web site was redesigned and outreach activities were conducted, but no paid advertising ran because of reduced funding.

Share Air

DSHS introduced the *Share Air* media campaign in FY2006 in an effort to educate the public about the dangers of secondhand smoke. Television, radio, outdoor, theater, Internet and print advertisements are available in English and Spanish, and a Web site provides additional resources. The statewide campaign debuted in a media buy through the Texas Association of Broadcasters.

Due to budget limitations, only radio and television ads ran in FY2006, with other elements slated for use in FY2007.

The paid media campaigns described above are supplemented through the efforts of community groups, volunteer agencies, and contractors, who work to raise public awareness through press releases, letters to the editor, and public service announcements. Stations that run paid media schedules typically provide further exposure for campaigns by running additional public service announcements free-of-charge. FY2006 saw several notable events and in-kind contributions of this type.

Looking Ahead

DSHS is currently operating under the strategic plan for a tobacco-free Texas developed in 2002. The goal is to develop a road map for the logical and systematic statewide expansion of the Texas Tobacco Prevention Initiative. Additionally, DSHS assessed tobacco prevention and cessation activities across two divisions, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and Prevention and Preparedness. As a result, DSHS integrated the tobacco programs of both divisions into the Division of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services September 1, 2006 to assure the most effective and efficient statewide efforts. The state will continue to provide community education, retailer education, retailer incentives, media campaigns, and community mobilization strategies to support the work of local law enforcement. The integration will bring increased coordination across these strategies in 2007.