

Assessment and Evaluation

Tobacco Facts

September 2009

The Tobacco Program surveyed about 210,000 students in more than 1,000 Washington schools to ask them about their tobacco use, attitudes, and knowledge.

There are about 65,000 fewer Washington kids smoking than before the launch of the program.

There are about 295,000 fewer adult smokers in Washington – a 30 percent decrease – since the launch of the program.

The Washington Tobacco Prevention and Control Program uses a comprehensive approach to reducing disease and death caused by tobacco use. The Tobacco Program set a goal to prevent about 84,000 early deaths by 2010, and provide longer, healthier, and more productive lives for Washington residents. To make sure the program is making progress toward that goal, it developed more immediate ways to measure the effectiveness of its efforts.

Surveying tobacco users and kids

The most important early indication of success is the reduction in rates of tobacco use among youth and adults.

Adult tobacco use is measured using a telephone survey of Washington residents that asks a variety of health questions. Washington's program is expected to reduce adult cigarette smoking from 16.5 percent in 2007 to 14 percent or less by 2013.

Tobacco use among youth is measured with a school-based questionnaire administered to 6th-, 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-grade students every two years. Washington's program is expected to reduce cigarette smoking among 10th graders from 14.9 percent in 2006 to 10 percent or less by 2013.

Improving Tobacco Program performance through evaluation

Changes in attitudes about tobacco use are early indicators that Tobacco Program efforts are working. For example, programs in schools increase student disapproval of tobacco use; stop smoking programs increase the proportion of tobacco users who quit; community programs change community acceptance of tobacco use; and public education campaigns create changes in perceptions about tobacco.

Frequent, ongoing evaluations of each program component monitor performance and allow the Tobacco Program to adjust its activities for maximum effectiveness.

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Find out more about
secondhand smoke:
SmokeFreeWashington.com

Find out more about the
Tobacco Quit Line at:
www.quitline.com

Visit our youth Web site at:
www.nostankyous.com

For more information on
tobacco prevention:
www.doh.wa.gov/tobacco

Ongoing validation by outside experts

Researchers from the University of Washington, Washington State University, Washington State Department of Health, other state tobacco control programs, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provide consultation and review for evaluation activities.

A comprehensive approach to fighting tobacco use

Research shows that state anti-tobacco programs must be broad-based and comprehensive to be effective. In addition to conducting ongoing assessment and evaluation, Washington's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program supports programs in communities and schools, conducts public awareness and media campaigns, encourages smoke-free environments, provides services to help people quit, and restricts the ability of kids to get tobacco.