

School-based Programs

March 2009

Tobacco Facts*

There are about 70,000 youth who smoke cigarettes in Washington.

Percent of youth smoking by grade:
Grade 6: 1.4 percent
Grade 8: 7.3 percent
Grade 10: 14.4 percent
Grade 12: 20.0 percent

Two out of five Washington 6th graders practiced saying "no to tobacco" in school.

Three out of four 8th graders were taught an anti-tobacco lesson in school.

Three out of four 8th graders reported that no-use tobacco rules were usually enforced at their school.

*Data Source:
2008 Healthy Youth Survey

CONTACT:
Carla Huyck
Department of Health
PO Box 47848
Olympia, WA 98504-7848
360-236-3678
carla.huyck@doh.wa.gov

Young people at risk

Forty-five children in Washington start smoking cigarettes every day. Surveys of adult smokers in Washington show that about half of them had first tried cigarettes by age 14 and 70 percent of them were smoking regularly before they left high school.

Implementing school-based efforts

To help keep kids from starting to use tobacco, the Department of Health's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program provides funding and consultation to schools through Washington's nine Educational Service Districts. School programs:

- Educate students about the dangers of tobacco.
- Promote strong "no tobacco use attitudes" among students.
- Provide students with skills to resist peer pressure to use tobacco.

The programs focus on students in grades 5-9, the grades in which most tobacco use begins.

Washington used the federal government's *Guidelines for School Health Programs* in designing its school programs. The guidelines call for comprehensive programs that:

- Implement a research-based, anti-tobacco curriculum.
- Train teachers and staff to implement curricula.
- Develop, strengthen, and enforce tobacco-free school policies.
- Support quit programs for students who use tobacco.
- Involve parents, families, students, staff, local government, and other community members in the school's anti-tobacco program efforts.
- Conduct regular assessments of the school program.

An Oregon study showed that comprehensive school programs are far more effective at reducing student tobacco use than programs that rely on classroom lessons alone.

Forging working partnerships

Efforts with Washington schools involve broad collaboration across several public and non-profit agencies, including the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, school districts, local health departments, and community-based organizations.

The Educational Service Districts, with their proven ability to deliver regional assistance to all 296 Washington school districts, coordinate the distribution of state resources to schools. The Educational Service Districts provide information to schools, train school staff, and hold schools accountable for measurable outcomes.

Licensing and monitoring sales

The Tobacco Program works closely with the state Liquor Control Board to ensure retailer compliance with tobacco sales laws. The Liquor Control Board conducts on-site inspections to ensure that signage, compliance, and licensing requirements are met; tracks and enforces violations; and works with retailers to correct problems. In addition, the Tobacco Program and Liquor Control Board track the distribution of free tobacco products in clubs and at events like fairs, concerts, and rodeos, and work with communities to ensure applicable laws and requirements are met.

Restricting social sources

As tobacco becomes more difficult to obtain from stores, kids turn to social sources, such as older friends, family members, and other adults to obtain tobacco. The Tobacco Program and its partners are producing new programs and informational materials to discourage adults from providing tobacco to minors. The program encourages local programs to try innovative approaches to limiting youth access to tobacco, such as Puyallup's TIES (Tobacco Intervention Education and Support) project in which local officials combine enforcement of youth possession laws, school policies, and public education to discourage youth from buying, possessing, and using tobacco.

A comprehensive approach to fighting tobacco use

Research shows that tobacco prevention programs must conduct a comprehensive set of strategies to be effective. The Washington State Tobacco Prevention and Control Program provides services to help people quit, conducts public awareness and media campaigns, supports local programs in communities and schools, supports enforcement of policies to keep kids from accessing tobacco products, and evaluates the effectiveness of program activities.

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.NoStankYou.com

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