



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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HAWAI'I YOUTH CIGARETTE SMOKING RATES DECLINE

New Forms of Tobacco Use and Marketing Practices Raise Concern

HONOLULU - The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Education (DOE) today released survey findings showing dramatic improvements in reducing tobacco use among Hawai'i youth. Results released from the 2011 Hawai'i School Health Survey's Youth Tobacco Survey (HYTS) show current smoking (in the past 30 days) among high school students has decreased by 64 percent from 24.5 percent in 2000 to 8.7 percent in 2011, and frequent smoking (on 20 or more of the past 30 days) has reduced over 70 percent from 10.3 percent in 2000 to 2.9 percent in 2011. Among middle school students, current smoking declined from 5.3 percent in 2003 to 3.6 percent in 2011, and only 0.7 percent reported frequent smoking in 2011.

Hawai'i teens smoke at lower rates when compared to teens nationally (at 17.2 percent for high school students and 5.2 percent of middle school students according to the National Youth Tobacco Survey 2009).

"These data demonstrate that a comprehensive tobacco prevention and control program has made a positive difference for Hawaii's youth," said Health Director Loretta Fuddy. "The Department of Health Hawai'i Tobacco Prevention and Education Program has made significant progress since the program was created in reducing youth smoking rates."

New Concerns

While the HYTS results are positive and cigarette use among youth in Hawai'i continues to decrease, there are new concerns about the use of alternate tobacco products. These have recently gained popularity among youth and are being heavily marketed by the tobacco industry. For the first time, this year's survey shows the use of such products by youth in Hawai'i, including

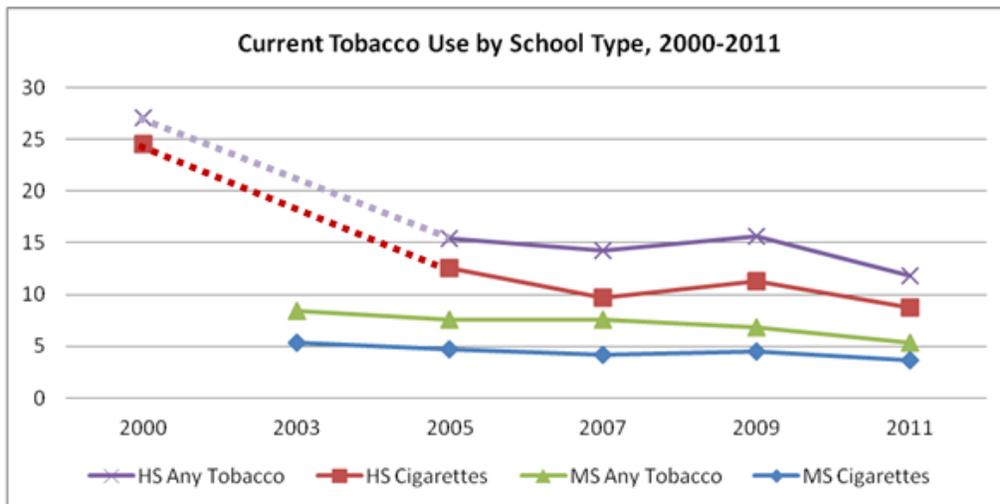
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e-cigarettes, hookah, orbs, sticks, strips and snus. Data shows that 12.8 percent of high school students have tried hookah and 5.1 percent have tried e-cigarettes. Smokeless tobacco rates for Hawai'i youth have remained about the same over the years, and the DOH continues to closely monitor these rates.

The HYTS also reports for the first time on the presence of tobacco advertising and promotion in Hawai'i: 48.9 percent of high school and 47.1 percent of middle school students recounted seeing signs or advertising for tobacco in Hawai'i stores. Research has shown that tobacco marketing is a key factor in young people starting tobacco use, and is more influential than peer pressure or parental smoking. Policy changes to reduce the tobacco industry influence in Hawai'i storefronts could further decrease youth smoking rates.

According to U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin, M.D., "Strong laws, tobacco excise taxes and fully funded tobacco prevention programs are what are proven to work to prevent youth smoking."

The Youth Tobacco Survey is part of the Hawai'i School Health Survey and is administered jointly by the DOH and DOE to public school students in grades 6-12 every two years. The full survey report is available online from the DOH website, www.hawaii.gov/health, and more detailed data reports by student, gender, grade and race/ethnicity are available at the Hawai'i Health Data Warehouse website, www.hhdw.org.



Note: 2000 MS and 2003 HS data are not reportable due to insufficient participation.

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