



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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**CDC REPORT SHOWS POSITIVE RESULTS FOR HAWAII
TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAMS**

*State ranks third lowest in the country for adult smoking and
second lowest for youth tobacco use*

HONOLULU – Hawaii tobacco control programs appear to be having an impact. A new U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report released today shows how each of the 50 states is faring in implementing proven strategies that reduce tobacco use, such as comprehensive smoke-free policies, hard-hitting media campaigns, higher prices on tobacco products and access to cessation services.

The CDC's *Tobacco Control State Highlights 2012* shows 16.8 percent of the adult population in Hawaii are current smokers, ranking third lowest among all states. Only Utah and California rank better. The report further shows that 12 percent of Hawaii youth are using tobacco products, ranking second lowest among all states. Nationally, 19 percent of adults and 18.1 percent of high school students still smoke.

"We are very proud of our state's significant accomplishments in reducing smoking rates among our citizens," said Health Director Loretta Fuddy. "This demonstrates the effectiveness of having sustained public health efforts toward tobacco control, wisely using our tobacco trust fund dollars, maintaining high tobacco taxes, and enacting comprehensive smoke-free laws."

Eight states raised their cigarette excise taxes a total of nine times since the last report was issued in April 2010, and five states passed comprehensive smoke-free laws since then. However, that represents a significant slowdown in state legislative activity on tobacco control

(more)

that took place earlier in the decade. For example, from 2000 until the last *State Highlights* report in 2010, 22 states enacted comprehensive smoke-free policies.

The cigarette excise tax in Hawaii is one of the highest in the nation at \$3.20 per pack. Hawaii was the fourteenth state to enact a smoke-free law that prohibits smoking in worksites, including restaurants, bars and nightclubs. County ordinances have created further protection against exposure to secondhand smoke. Hawaii County passed a law banning smoking in automobiles with minors and also prohibits smoking in parks, beaches, and recreation areas. The Honolulu County Council is currently considering banning smoking on five beaches. Such laws contribute to increasing the percentage of smokers who make quit attempts. In 2011, 54 percent of adult smokers in Hawaii made a serious attempt to quit smoking. The Hawaii Tobacco Quitline has expanded its services to provide free coaching and free nicotine patches or gum to all Hawaii residents, regardless of insurance.

Still, more work is needed to eliminate tobacco use. “Even after significant progress in reducing tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure in the last decade, much more work needs to be done to end the tobacco use epidemic,” said Dr. Tim McAfee, director of the CDC Office on Smoking and Health. “There is excellent research that clearly identifies what needs to be done to eliminate tobacco use. States can accelerate their efforts to save lives and reduce tobacco-related health care costs.”

The purpose of the highlights report is to provide state tobacco control programs with valid, reliable, state-specific data about the high-impact, cost-effective strategies they are currently using or could be implementing as well as measures to track their progress. The CDC report also confirms that while the nation has made enormous progress in reducing smoking, smoking declines have slowed in recent years.

Each year, approximately 443,000 people die from smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke, and another 8.6 million suffer from a serious smoking-related illness. Moreover, annual costs associated with tobacco-related illness amount to nearly \$96 million in medical expenses, \$97 million in lost productivity, and 5.1 million years of potential life lost in the United States annually.

To get help quitting smoking, call the Hawaii Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit www.ClearTheSmoke.org.

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