

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



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State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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Teen Smoking Declines in Florida

– New Data Shows an Overall Decrease in Tobacco Use Among the State’s Youth –

TALLAHASSEE – New data, released this week by the Florida Department of Health (DOH), indicates there are tens of thousands of fewer teens smoking today than before the Tobacco Free Florida program launched in 2007. This drop equates to 40.7 percent fewer Florida high school students who are current cigarette smokers.

Since 2007, there are about 70,000¹ fewer youth smokers and 272,000² fewer youth exposed to secondhand smoke, which contains hundreds of toxic chemicals, 69 known to cause cancer.³ The progress seen in Florida is consistent with a downward trend in cigarette use and an increase in smoke-free policies around the country.

"This significant decrease in smoking among youth is great news for the young people of Florida," said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. "Our tobacco prevention program's statewide media campaign and community-level interventions are making a positive difference for Florida's families."

The data, provided by the Florida Department of Health's 2013 Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS),⁴ shows:

- 8.6 percent of high school students reported current cigarette use, meaning they smoked a cigarette at least once during the past 30 days, a 40.7 percent decrease compared to 2007
- 13.5 percent of high school students reported current cigar use, a 31.1 percent decline compared to 2007
- 5.6 percent of high school students reported current smokeless tobacco use, a 12.3 percent decrease compared to 2007

In 2006, Florida voters overwhelmingly approved a state constitutional amendment requiring 15 percent of the state's tobacco settlement fund be used for a comprehensive tobacco education and prevention program. In 2007, the funding was used to launch the Tobacco Free Florida program, which is managed by the DOH.

Preventing tobacco use and encouraging cessation among young people are critical in combating the tobacco epidemic because nearly nine out of 10 smokers start by age 18.⁵ In fact, despite the progress in reducing the number of smokers, an estimated 18,900 youth (under 18 years)⁶ in Florida will become new cigarette smokers this year. Of every three young smokers, only one will quit, and one of those remaining smokers will die from tobacco-related causes.⁷

"Data shows the number of youth who try or habitually use tobacco increases with each increasing grade level," said Tobacco Free Florida Bureau Chief Shannon Hughes. "As students go back to school, now is a perfect time for parents to talk with their kids about the dangers of tobacco use."

Teens whose parents strongly disapprove of their tobacco use – even if they use tobacco themselves – are less likely to take up tobacco. Parental disapproval has even been found to counteract peer influence.⁸ Yet, the 2013 FYTS shows that only 49.6 percent of high school students had talked with a parent or guardian about the dangers of tobacco in the past year.

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It's also important for health care providers to talk to their young patients. In fact, youth were less likely to try smoking if they received some kind of counseling or education from their doctors or other health care providers, according to recommendations by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force released on Aug 26. The influential panel's recommendations were published in two medical journals, the Annals of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics.

For tips on talking with kids and teens about tobacco, please visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/apps/tipsforparents.

ABOUT TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA

DOH's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund.

Tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of the state's three ways to quit. To learn about Tobacco Free Florida and the state's free quit resources, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

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¹ Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2012

² Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2012

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2010.

⁴ Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2013

⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012.

⁶ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Florida. Web. http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/toll_us/florida. Updated June 20 2013,

⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2012.

⁸ National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2011). Facts on drugs: Tobacco addiction. NIDA for Teens. Retrieved April 5, 2012, from http://teens.drugabuse.gov/facts/facts_nicotine1.php