



Position Statement (April 2016): Tobacco Use in Ohio

OPHA Mission Statement: To be an inclusive voice for Public Health and to ensure the optimal health of all Ohioans.

Today, smoking is still the leading preventable cause of death. Research has shown that smoking causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, and various respiratory diseases including emphysema, bronchitis, and chronic airway obstruction¹. Smoking also increases the risk for tuberculosis, eye diseases, low birthweight births, and immune system problems¹.

On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than non-smokers¹. In the United States, cigarette smoking accounts for approximately one in five deaths annually, or about 480,000 people¹.

Tobacco use is also a health risk to non-smokers. The inhalation of secondhand smoke can lead to heart disease and lung cancer. In children, secondhand smoke can cause asthma, respiratory and ear infections, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Forty-two thousand (42,000) people die every year from secondhand smoke¹.

In spite of these facts, 23.4% of Ohioans 18 and older still smoke (2013)². In fact, the state ranks 43rd in the United States for adult smoking rate³. Among Ohio youth grades 6 to 12, 15.1% are smokers (2013)². Considerable disparities exist in smoking rates by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and education².

Other potential health risks lie in e-cigarettes, which are not FDA regulated. E-cigarettes often contain cancer-causing chemicals such as formaldehyde⁴. They contain nicotine, which can affect fetal development and adolescent brain development. A 2014 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed 13.4% of high school students use e-cigarettes⁴. E-cigarette use in high school students surpasses that of traditional cigarettes by 4.2%⁴. In addition to concerns about the safety of these cigarettes, there is concern that teens' use of e-cigarettes will lead to regular cigarette smoking.

Ohio has made progress in efforts to curb tobacco use in our state. The number of youth smokers decreased 6% since 2011². In 2015, lawmakers approved a \$0.35 increase in the tax rate for a pack of cigarettes. This brought the tax rate to \$1.60/pack, up from the \$1.25/pack

1. CDC, "Smoking and Tobacco Use Fast Facts."

http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/fast_facts/

2. CDC, "Smoking and Tobacco Use State Highlights-Ohio."

http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/state_data/state_highlights/2012/states/ohio/index.htm

3. United Health Foundation, America's Health Rankings. "Smoking-United States."

<http://www.americashealthrankings.org/all/smoking>

4. American Lung Association, "E-cigarettes and Lung Health." <http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/tobacco-control-advocacy/federal/e-cigarettes.html>

rate set in 2005⁵. In addition, in 2013, the tax rate on “little cigars” was increased to equal that of cigarettes⁵.

According to the American Lung Association, Ohio has an “A” grade for smoke-free air⁶. In November 2006, voters in Ohio approved an indoor smoking ban, significantly reducing exposure to secondhand smoke. Under this legislation, smoking is banned from all workplaces, restaurants, bars, and other public institutions (ORC 3794.01).

Although progress has been made, tobacco use among Ohioans must still receive significant attention. According to research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), raising the price of tobacco products, enforcing smoke-free policies, and providing funding for cessation and prevention are all necessary to reduce smoking rates. Ohio has addressed some of these issues; however, there is still a lot of work to do. In fiscal year 2015, Ohio’s appropriated funding for tobacco control was only 7.4% of the CDC best practices recommended budget⁶. In addition, the American Lung Association recommends a \$1/pack tax increase⁶.



Ohio Report Card from American Lung Association⁶

Continued effort is necessary to make sure the rates of tobacco use in Ohio continue to decline. Youth must be educated on the addictive, destructive nature of tobacco. Access to cessation and treatment programs, including counseling, must be widespread and simple. Public Health advocates for policies that promote health by considering the impact of all policies through a Health and Equity in All Policies (HEiAP) perspective. Therefore, OPHA supports and advocates for policy-making that systematically takes into account the health and equity implications of those policies, by working collaboratively across all sectors to achieve common health goals. Disparities must be eliminated and the relationship among tobacco use, mortality, and morbidity must also be addressed.

Recommendations:

1. Support and advocate for adequate funding for education, tobacco-prevention, and treatment, including the Ohio Quit Line.
2. Support tax increases on all tobacco products.
3. Support stiffer penalties and stronger enforcement for underage tobacco sales.
4. Support efforts to make more environmental areas smoke-free such as school, college, and hospital campuses, as well as multifamily dwellings (more than four apartments).
5. Support the Smoke Free Ohio Act and maintain its enforcement components.
6. Support FDA regulation of e-cigarettes.

5. Ohio Department of Taxation. “Excise & Energy Tax Information Releases.”

http://www.tax.ohio.gov/excise/information_releases/index_excise.aspx

6. American Lung Association, “State of Tobacco Control-Ohio.” <http://www.stateoftobaccocontrol.org/state-grades/ohio/>

7. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Healthy People 2020.

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/tobacco-use/objectives>

7. Promote programming that addresses Healthy People 2020 including tobacco cessation, tobacco screening, increased federal and state taxation of tobacco products then increased tobacco-free environments⁷.
8. Advocate for including the Health and Equity in All Policies framework in formulating tobacco policies by public and private entities at the local, regional, and state levels.

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4. American Lung Association, "E-cigarettes and Lung Health." <http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/tobacco-control-advocacy/federal/e-cigarettes.html>