

NEWS RELEASE



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Cathryn Cushing, 971-673-1013 (office), 503-793-9012 (cell),

Contact: cathryn.s.cushing@state.or.us

Headline: Cigarette sales decline in Oregon

Oregonians are buying fewer cigarettes, according to data released today by the Oregon Department of Human Services. The number of cigarettes sold in Oregon declined from 189 million packs of cigarettes during 2008 — equivalent to 50.4 packs for every man, woman and child living in the state — to 183 million packs sold during 2009 equivalent to 48.4 packs for every man, woman, and child.

Since the Oregon Tobacco Prevention and Education Program began in 1996, per capita cigarette consumption has declined 46 percent, meaning that 3.2 billion fewer cigarettes were sold. After program funding was reduced, sales went up and then dropped again when funding was restored in 2007.

“We’ve helped create a state where 83 percent of adults don’t smoke, all workers are protected from secondhand smoke and young people have less access to tobacco. More than a quarter of Oregon smokers have broken their deadly addiction since our work began,” said Katrina Hedberg, interim state epidemiologist for the Oregon Public Health Division. “But tobacco prevention is far from over. Sixteen percent of adult Oregonians still smoke — the majority of whom want to quit. Tobacco use contributes to nearly a quarter of all deaths and costs the state more than \$2 billion each year. Every day, 20 youth start smoking.”

This report comes on the heels of state tobacco data released today by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The report shows how Oregon compares with other states in preventing and regulating tobacco use. Highlights include:

- Smoking rates: Oregon ranks 11th, with 16.3 percent of adults smoking. Nationally, rates range from 9.3 percent to 26.5 percent. Among youth smokers, Oregon ranks 16th, with 9.7 percent of 12-17 year-olds smoking.
- Smokefree air: Oregon receives high marks for its strong smokefree workplace law, which protects nearly 100 percent of workers.

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- Helping smokers quit: Oregon smokers call the quitline at a higher-than-average rate, with 6.4 percent of smokers seeking assistance. The state also receives kudos for comprehensive quit support provided through Medicaid.
- Smokefree homes: Nearly 85 percent of Oregon homes have policies restricting smoking, making Oregon number five in the nation. Smokefree homes protect residents from asthma and other diseases caused by secondhand smoke, and help keep youth from starting to use tobacco.
- Spreading the word: Oregonians are reached at a higher-than-average rate by anti-tobacco advertising messages, but still do not hear messages as often as CDC recommends.
- Tobacco sales: Oregon allows local regulation of tobacco industry promotions, sampling and display of tobacco products. For example, the Pendleton Roundup was able to ban tobacco sampling, stopping companies from handing out cans of chewing tobacco to children and other rodeo visitors. However, Oregon does not require establishments selling tobacco to be licensed, as is the practice in 37 other states.
- Price of tobacco: Oregon's tobacco tax of \$1.18 per pack has not increased since 2002 and ranks 26th among the states. Oregon does not have a minimum price law. Raising the price of tobacco is one of the best ways to help smokers quit and keep youth from starting.
- Funding for prevention: Oregon's funding for tobacco control was just 11.1 percent of the recommended level in 2007, making it 35th among the states.

“Our tobacco prevention work is one part of making it easier for Oregonians to make healthy choices,” Hedberg says. “If everyone is able to eat well, move more and quit tobacco we can greatly reduce the risk and burden of cancer, heart attacks and most chronic diseases. We can improve the quality of life for all Oregonians.”

About TPEP

The Oregon Tobacco Prevention and Education Program works with local health departments, tribes, schools and community organizations to deliver a comprehensive tobacco prevention program to all Oregon residents. These program activities are based on evidence-based strategies to reduce and prevent tobacco use. For more information, visit www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/tobacco/. For complete statistics on Oregon tobacco use and effect, go to www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/tobacco/docs/facts09.pdf.

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(Tobacco consumption chart attached.)

Oregon cigarette consumption trends and Implementation of the Tobacco Prevention and Education Program

