

News release

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As Oregon cigarette sales drop, so do tobacco-related cancers *Oregon Tobacco Facts & Laws annual report released today*

There is good news about tobacco use in Oregon, according to new data released today. Tobacco-related cancer diagnoses and deaths have declined in Oregon, concurrently with a drop in cigarette sales state-wide. Second-hand smoke exposure has also dropped in the workplace and more people report that they do not allow smoking in their homes.

Oregon Public Health Division officials attribute the declines in part to the Smokefree Workplace Law that took effect in 2009 and also to continued tobacco prevention and education programs that have helped shift public attitudes about smoking. And smokefree homes have become more pervasive, with 91 percent of adults reporting no one is allowed to smoke in the home.

“As smoking becomes less the norm, people will smoke less and avoid the terrible diseases that come with tobacco use,” said Katrina Hedberg, M.D., M.P.H., state epidemiologist. “This not only keeps people healthier, it reduces the cost of treating preventable cancers and other tobacco-related illness.”

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Tobacco-related cancer deaths went from 93.6 per 100,000 population between 1996 and 2001 to 89.2 per 100,000 between 2002 and 2007, a 4.7 percent drop, according to the Oregon Tobacco Prevention & Education Program's (TPEP) *2011 Oregon Tobacco Facts & Laws* report released today. The number of new tobacco-related cancer diagnoses dropped during the same period, from 150.8 to 146.8 per 100,000, a decline of 2.7 percent.

At the same time, Oregon saw a 48 percent decrease in per-capita cigarette purchases between 1996 -- the year TPEP started -- and 2009, compared with a 40 percent drop nationwide during that time. Today, 3.4 billion fewer cigarettes are sold each year in Oregon than would be if use had not declined.

Reducing tobacco use is part of the Oregon Health Authority's "Action Plan for Health" that was released last month. The plan provides specific steps to be taken in Oregon to improve health, lower costs, and increase the quality of health care for all Oregonians. Tobacco-related diseases cost the state an estimated \$2.4 billion a year in total economic costs, which includes about \$1 billion a year in health care costs, according to the report.

Hedberg said the tobacco report also shows the areas where more work needs to be done. She points to several red flags raised in the new report:

- Hookah tobacco smoking by Oregon teenagers is on the rise, while use of all other forms of tobacco by teens is decreasing or staying the same.
- While cigarette sales are dropping, the number of people smoking is staying steady.
- Only 46 percent of smokers with children say that smoking is never allowed in any of their cars.

"Local tobacco control efforts are absolutely critical to helping people stop using tobacco or preventing them from picking up the cigarettes in the first place," says Hedberg. "We will continue offering a wide variety of resources so people can get the information and help they need."

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The Tobacco Prevention & Education Program of Oregon Public Health runs the Oregon Tobacco Quit Line, funds anti-tobacco media campaigns, and supports tobacco control efforts in all counties and tribes. Hedberg notes that many counties have policies banning smoking at college campuses, housing, parks and fairs.

Meanwhile, tobacco companies spent \$137 million in 2006 marketing their products to Oregonians, according to U.S. Federal Trade Commission reports. In contrast, tobacco prevention and education is funded with less than \$8 million a year.

“The tobacco industry wants to keep Oregonians addicted, and we need to continually counter their efforts,” Hedberg said.

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The Oregon Tobacco Prevention and Education Program, funded by state tobacco taxes, 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. View the full [report](#) at on the OHA website.

To read the Oregon Health Authority’s “Action Plan for Health,” go to the [OHA website](#).

Additional resources for media:

- Brett Hamilton, Tobacco-Free Coalition of Oregon: 503-740-0820, brett.w.hamilton@gmail.com
- Colleen Hermann-Franzen, American Lung Association in Oregon: 503-718-6145, chermann@lungoregon.org
- Jason Parks, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network: 503-795-3955, jason.parks@cancer.org
- Stephanie Tama-Sweet, American Heart Association: 503-595-2278, Stephanie.Tama-Sweet@heart.org