



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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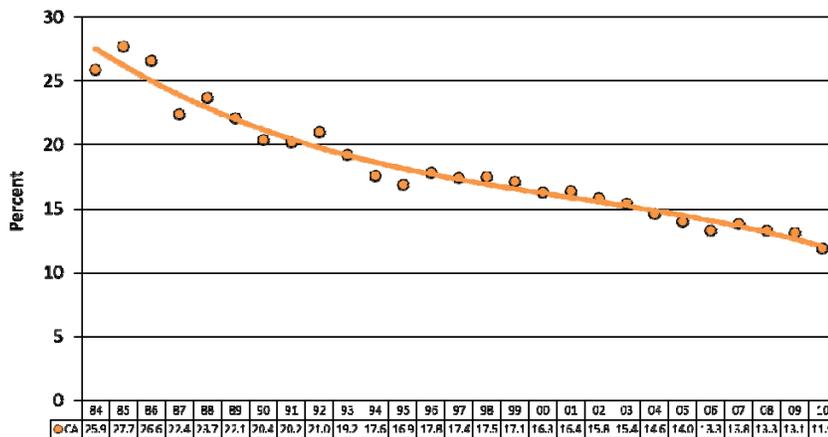
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California Adult Smoking Rate Reaches Historic Low

SACRAMENTO – The state’s adult smoking rate has hit a record low, announced California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director Dr. Ron Chapman today. Last year, 11.9 percent of the state’s adults smoked, down from 13.1 percent in 2009, making California one of only two states to reach the federal Healthy People 2020 target of reducing the adult smoking prevalence rate to 12 percent.

Smoking Prevalence among California Adults, 1984-2010



“The drop in smoking means that fewer people will see their lives cut short by tobacco,” Chapman said. “Since the inception of California’s tobacco education efforts in 1990, we have witnessed declines in lung cancer, heart disease and other tobacco-related illnesses.”

Chapman praised the state’s success in reducing tobacco use, but noted California must continue its aggressive efforts: “While we take great pride in seeing smoking decrease nearly 10 percent in just one year, smoking remains the number one preventable cause of death and disease, killing more than 400,000 Americans each year.”

Smoking among high school students decreased from 14.6 percent in 2008 to 13.8 percent in 2010, while middle school student smoking decreased from 6.0 percent in 2008 to 4.8 percent in 2010.

Although men continue to smoke at higher rates than women – 14.4 percent and 9.4 percent respectively – both groups have shown declines since 2009 when 15.6 percent of men and 10.7 percent of women smoked. In addition, smoking rates declined among

all age groups. The most significant decrease occurred among adults ages 25 to 44, which fell from 15.2 percent in 2009 to 13.1 percent in 2010.

California's 2010 adult smoking rates are from the Centers for Disease Control's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. The 2010 youth smoking prevalence rate is taken from the in-school California Student Tobacco Survey that is fielded biennially. Charts illustrating the data are available at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/tobacco/Pages/CTCPMediaCampaign.aspx>

The California Tobacco Control Program was established by the Tobacco Tax and Health Promotion Act of 1988. The act, which was approved by California voters, instituted a 25-cent tax on each pack of cigarettes and earmarked 5 cents of that tax to fund California's tobacco control efforts. These efforts include funding local health departments and community organizations, an aggressive media campaign and tobacco-related evaluation and surveillance. California's comprehensive approach has changed social norms around tobacco-use and secondhand smoke which have produced dramatic results. It is estimated California's tobacco control efforts have saved more than 1 million lives and have resulted in \$86 billion worth of savings in health care costs. To learn more about California's program, visit www.TobaccoFreeCA.com.

www.cdph.ca.gov

