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FLORIDA ADULT SMOKING RATE AT A RECORD LOW

But New County Rankings Show Many Communities Lagging Behind



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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Tobacco Free Florida’s efforts have helped reduce the state cigarette smoking rate to a record low. In Florida, 15.8 percent of adults (ages 18+) were current cigarette smokers in 2015, the latest data available. Florida ranked 16th among the states.¹

While smoking in Florida is low overall, there are geographic and demographic inequalities across the state, as seen in the 2017 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps report released today. The report, which is a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, looks at a variety of measures that can affect the health and future of communities, such as rates of smoking.

Many of Florida’s rural counties had significantly higher smoking rates than the statewide average (15.8 percent).²

- Gadsden, Hardee, Madison, Okeechobee, Union – 21 percent
- DeSoto, Hamilton, Hendry, Holmes, Liberty, Putnam, Suwannee – 20 percent
- Baker, Calhoun, Dixie, Jackson, Lafayette, Washington – 19 percent

“Tobacco Free Florida has made remarkable progress in the past 10 years; but, too many Floridians, especially our most vulnerable and less fortunate, are still greatly impacted by the burden of tobacco use,” said Tobacco Free Florida Bureau Chief Kellie O’Dare Wilson, Ph.D. “In many communities across our state, smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke are accepted as a fact of life, but they do not have to be. We want Floridians in every county to know that there is help available and best of all it’s free.”

Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in Florida and the U.S.³ Cigarette smoking disproportionately affects the health of people with low socioeconomic status, including lower income or education.^{4,5} Lower income cigarette smokers suffer more from diseases caused by smoking than do smokers with higher incomes.⁶

Smoking not only affects one's health, it also impacts families financially. In just one year, a pack-a-day smoker in Florida can spend more than \$2,000 on cigarettes. That can add up to more than \$10,000 in just five years.

Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way program gives tobacco users in all counties access to free tools and services to help them quit. More than 159,000 Floridians have successfully quit tobacco using one of these free services. The Tobacco Free Florida campaign has also been linked to reducing relapses among those who have quit.⁷

For more information on the free Quit Your Way tools and services, please visit tobaccofreeflorida.com/quityourway.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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About Tobacco Free Florida

The department's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Since the program began in 2007, more than 159,000 Floridians have successfully quit using one of Tobacco Free Florida's free tools and services. There are now approximately 451,000 fewer adult smokers in Florida than there was 10 years ago, and the state has saved \$17.7 billion in health care costs. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way services, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or on Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

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¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data, Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2015.

² University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings 2017.

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking: 50 Years of Progress. 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, 2014.

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking: 50 Years of Progress. 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, 2014.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults—United States, 2005-2014. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2015;64(44):1233-40 [accessed 2016 Mar 29].

⁶ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Tobacco and Socioeconomic Status. Washington, D.C.: Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2015 [accessed 2016 Mar 29].

⁷ Nonnemaker, James M., et al. "The effect of exposure to media campaign messages on adult cessation." Addictive behaviors 49 (2015): 13-19.