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TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA LOOKS AT DISPARITIES DURING TFF WEEK



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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health’s Tobacco Free Florida program is launching a new initiative during of the annual Tobacco Free Florida Week, taking place April 2 – 8. The theme, *Achieving Health Equity*, raises awareness of tobacco-related health disparities throughout the state. Promoting health equity—each individual achieving optimal health—is a statewide priority highlighted in the state’s newly revised state health improvement plan.

More than 2.5 million adults in Florida are current cigarette smokers.^{1,2} These individuals represent some of our most vulnerable populations, and they are disproportionately affected by the burden of tobacco use. The health burden of tobacco use is especially high among racial and ethnic minorities, low-income individuals, the LGBT community and those with mental health conditions.³ Tobacco Free Florida has made significant progress in lowering tobacco use across the state, but addressing these disparity groups still using tobacco at higher rates is a top priority.

“Tobacco Free Florida is proud of the remarkable success that the program and its numerous partners have in the last decade, but there’s still more work to do,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary Dr. Celeste Philip. “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. The Bureau is dedicated to identifying innovative solutions to achieve health equity across Florida and help reduce tobacco use disparities.”

Important facts:

- Exposure to tobacco marketing and tobacco product displays increases cravings for tobacco products, making quit attempts more difficult.⁴
- Tobacco use is higher among adults with incomes less than \$30,000 annually in Florida.^{5,6} Lower income cigarette smokers suffer more from diseases caused by smoking than do smokers with higher incomes.⁷
- Tobacco use is also higher among Florida adults who are not heterosexual as compared to heterosexual adults.^{8,9} These high rates of tobacco use within the LGBT community are due in part to the aggressive marketing by tobacco companies that sponsor events, bar promotions, giveaways and advertisements.^{10,11,12}
- Smoking among white, non-Hispanic adults in Florida has declined since 2012, but smoking among African American and Hispanic Floridians has not significantly changed since 2012.^{13,14}

- Adults reporting poor mental health have higher smoking rates than adults reporting good mental health.^{15,16}
- For years, tobacco companies have spent billions of dollars to market their products to vulnerable and low-income populations.^{17,18}
- There is a higher density of tobacco retailers in communities with higher percentages of African Americans, Hispanics, people living below the poverty line or women older than 25 without a high school diploma.¹⁹:

On April 2, Tobacco Free Florida is also launching new TV ads to raise awareness of the free quit tools available to all Floridians. The TV ads feature six current smokers in communities where the health burden of tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure is especially high. The individuals express some of their many reasons to end their smoking addiction and direct to the free quit tools for help.

Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death in Florida and the United States.²⁰ Health communications, community and cessation interventions, and youth prevention efforts are still needed to discourage tobacco use initiation and counter social norms among subpopulations affected by tobacco-related disparities.

Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way program gives tobacco users in all counties access to free tools and services to help them quit. These free services have helped more than 188,000 Floridians successfully quit tobacco. For more information, please visit tobaccofreeflorida.com/quityourway.

About Tobacco Free Florida Week

The 10th annual Tobacco Free Florida Week takes place April 2 - 8. Join the conversation on social media using #FLHealthEquity.

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.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.

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 188,000 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.²¹ 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 16,469,339 Florida adults: Florida QuickStats. U.S. Census Bureau. U.S. Department of Commerce <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/FL/AGE115210#viewtop>

² 15.5 percent (or 2,552,747) Florida adults smoke were current cigarettes: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Prevalence and Trends Data, 2016. Atlanta: 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.

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- ⁶ National Center for Health Statistics. Survey Description, National Health Interview Survey, 2016. Hyattsville, Maryland. 2017.
- ⁷ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. Tobacco and Socioeconomic Status. Washington, D.C.: Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2015 [accessed 2016 Mar 29].
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- ¹² Fallin A, Goodin AJ, King BA. Menthol Cigarette Smoking among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 2015;48(1):93-7 [cited 2016 Mar 17].
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