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THE STATE OF TOBACCO CONTROL IN FLORIDA

Statement from the Bureau of Tobacco Free
Florida



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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – On Jan. 29, the American Lung Association (ALA) released the results of its annual report, “State of Tobacco Control 2020,” which monitors federal and state progress on key tobacco-related policies. The ALA’s formula for grades is largely based on funding allocations recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The report reinforces that comprehensive tobacco control programs, like Tobacco Free Florida, are essential to make a significant impact in reducing tobacco use in the state. According to the United States Surgeon General, smoking cessation can be increased by maintaining comprehensive statewide tobacco control programs.¹

The report commended Florida for the state’s Smokefree Air Laws, resulting in a “B” grade. In 2019, Florida included e-cigarette use in the Florida Clean Indoor Air Act, which banned the use of e-cigarettes where cigarette smoking is also prohibited. The long-term health effects of e-cigarette use are still unknown, but we do know that e-cigarette aerosol is not harmless can contain harmful and potentially harmful substances.²

In 2006, Florida voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment that called for reinstating a tobacco education and use prevention program. The Florida Department of Health’s Bureau of Tobacco Free Florida is funded by the settlement agreement that Florida won against tobacco companies in 1997, to compensate the state for past and future treatment of tobacco users. Tobacco Free Florida receives an amount equal to 15% of the funds paid to Florida in 2005 under the tobacco settlement, to ensure a comprehensive and consistent program is effectively implemented and evaluated per CDC’s “Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs.”

Despite operating at about one-third of CDC’s recommended level of funding, Tobacco Free Florida’s efforts have helped drastically reduce the adult and youth smoking rates in Florida.

The impact of the program is proven in numbers:

- Since Tobacco Free Florida launched in 2007, the adult cigarette smoking rate in the state has decreased from 21% in 2006 to 14.5% in 2018 – the lowest it’s ever been.^{3,4}
- Fewer young people have started smoking since Tobacco Free Florida was created. The youth smoking rate has decreased from 10.6% in 2006 to 1.5% in 2019 – a 85.8% decrease.^{5,6}
- Since Tobacco Free Florida’s hard-hitting advertising launched, quit attempts across the state increased and the campaign has been linked to reducing relapses among those who quit. Exposure to the program’s message has also caused positive shifts in smokers’ attitudes towards quitting.⁷

The ALA report's results, in addition to the continued status of youth e-cigarette use as a nationwide epidemic, show the Tobacco Free Florida program's sustained success is necessary. Last year, Tobacco Free Florida launched its statewide initiative "[E-Epidemic: Vaping and Youth](#)" in an effort to educate parents, educators, partners and medical professionals on the youth e-cigarette epidemic. Additionally, [Students Working Against Tobacco \(SWAT\)](#), Florida's statewide youth advocacy organization, launched a statewide initiative called "Not A Lab Rat" to educate its peers about e-cigarettes. Tobacco Free Florida's youth prevention campaign, [THE FACTS NOW](#), has also launched social media campaigns to educate teens and young adults across the state about e-cigarettes and nicotine addiction.

The Bureau is confident that the program will continue its positive momentum helping tobacco users quit, preventing youth from starting and helping to protect more Floridians from the dangers of secondhand smoke. If you or someone you know wants to quit tobacco, Tobacco Free Florida offers free and proven-effective tools and resources to help. Visit tobaccofreeflorida.com/quityourway to get started.

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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 234,000 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.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Smoking Cessation. 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, 2020.

² US Department of Health and Human Services. E-cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2016. Accessed July 27, 2018.

³ 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, 2007.

⁴ 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, 2019.

⁵ Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2006.

⁶ Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2019

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs—2014. 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, 2014.