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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. 27, the American Lung Association (ALA) released the results of its annual report, “State of Tobacco Control,” which monitors federal and state progress on key tobacco-related policies. The ALA’s grading formula is largely based on funding allocations recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

While this report serves as a high-level overview of state initiatives and investments, it does not account for other programs, like Tobacco Free Florida, which is among the most robust and respected in the country. The report does, however, reinforce that comprehensive tobacco control programs 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.<sup>1</sup> Tobacco Free Florida offers free quit tools and services, including nicotine replacement therapy (like the patch and gum) to any Florida resident, if over 18 years old and medically appropriate.

This year’s report included a new grade for flavored tobacco products, replacing the Tobacco 21 metric because that became a nationwide law in 2019. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has stated that flavors play an important role in attracting youth,<sup>2</sup> and little cigars are popular among children and young adults due to their candy-like flavorings.<sup>3</sup> However, increasingly popular disposable electronic cigarettes are not covered under the FDA’s flavored e-cigarette policy, and there are currently no federal restrictions on flavored cigar products. Tobacco Free Florida is working diligently to counteract the tobacco industry’s attempt to lure youth into a lifetime of addiction. Through State and Community Interventions policy work, county grantees educate communities about the benefits of Tobacco Retail Licenses, which can dictate rules around flavored product sales. Additionally, Tobacco Free Florida’s youth-reaching efforts – [Students Working Against Tobacco \(SWAT\)](#), Florida’s statewide youth advocacy organization, and [THE FACTS NOW](#) – promote awareness campaigns across multiple platforms on the role that flavors play in addicting youth to nicotine.

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 substances, like cancer-causing chemicals and heavy metals like nickel, tin, and lead.<sup>4</sup>

The ALA also applauded Florida for protecting the allocation of tobacco settlement dollars to a tobacco control program in the Florida Constitution. 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 just over 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 14.8% in 2019.<sup>5,6</sup>
- 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 2020 – a 85.8% decrease.<sup>7,8</sup>
- 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.<sup>9</sup>
- The reduction in adult smoking prevalence has saved Florida approximately \$17.7 billion in healthcare costs.

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](http://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 254,000 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](http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com) or follow the campaign on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida](https://www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida) or on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla](https://www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla).

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> FDA Statement. "Statement from FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, M.D., on new steps to address epidemic of youth e-cigarette use." U.S. Food and Drug Administration. 12 Sept. 2018

[www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm620185.htm](http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm620185.htm). Accessed January 28, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Villanti AC, Richardson A, Vallone DM, et al. Flavored tobacco product use among U.S. young adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 2013; 44(4):388–391. [Accessed 2021 Jan 07].

<sup>4</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services. *E-cigarette Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General pdf icon* [PDF – 8.47MB]. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2016. (Accessed December 11, 2020)

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> 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.