

North Carolina

Making Tobacco-Free Schools a Reality in a Tobacco-Growing State

Problem Overview

Each year, cigarette smoking accounts for approximately one of every five deaths in the United States. For high school students in North Carolina, the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey results indicated that

- 22% currently smoked cigarettes.
- Among students who currently smoked cigarettes, 55% tried to quit smoking cigarettes during the 12 months before the survey.

Tackling the smoking problem among youth, in a state that grows half of all the tobacco produced in the United States, has long presented a significant challenge for the public health and education sectors.

Program/Activity Description

Community efforts, such as those supported through the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch, the Health and Wellness Trust Fund, and the state's Tobacco-Free Schools (TFS) Initiative, have made significant strides in addressing this major health concern. Partnerships and cross-agency activities have been vital to North Carolina's progress in preventing smoking among its youth. In supporting the 100% TFS campaign, officials in the Department of Public Instruction gained state superintendent endorsement of TFS and worked to obtain a State School Board Resolution on TFS.

In addition, the North Carolina Healthy Schools Initiative, partly funded through CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health, supported development and implementation of school policies to advance the state's youth anti-smoking campaign. Individuals and teams working with the initiative

- Provided access for the state health department's Tobacco Control Program to engage school administrators and decision makers in promoting TFS policies.
- Conducted workshops to train principals, other administrators, school nurses, and Safe and Drug-Free Schools staff in ways to comply with TFS policies.
- Hosted forums with superintendents, principals, and school board members, encouraging them to endorse TFS policies and lead TFS efforts.

Program/Activity Outcomes

The percentage of school districts in North Carolina adopting 100% TFS policies increased from 5% in 2000 to 75% in 2007. The state legislature further bolstered the campaign by passing a law in 2007 mandating statewide TFS compliance. By July 2008, all 115 of the state's school districts were 100% tobacco free.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Adolescent and School Health
www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth

