

## HEALTH INDICATOR:

# Adult Smoking Rates in Denver

DENVER  
HEALTH



### Working together to reduce smoking in Denver

Tobacco takes an enormous toll on the Denver community. Each year, one in five deaths in Denver is due to tobacco-related illnesses. This health indicator provides information on tobacco use among adults in Denver. It also includes details about what is being done to address this public health problem.

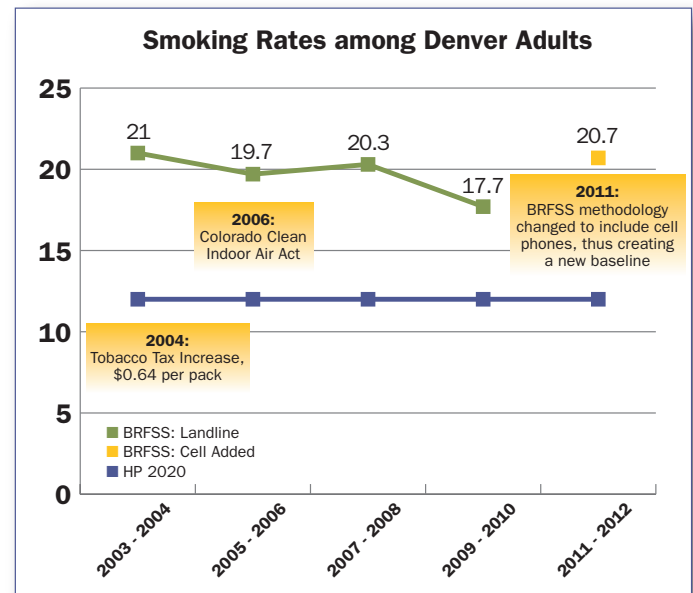
### What are we measuring, and how are we measuring it?

Denver Public Health regularly measures smoking rates among adults who live in Denver. We measure this using the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey (BRFSS), a telephone survey led by state health departments. The BRFSS includes questions on topics like smoking, car safety, and obesity. Denver estimates from this annual survey are reported every two years because of small sample sizes.

Nationally, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People program provides science-based, 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans. The Healthy People 2020 (HP 2020) goal is to reduce the national smoking average to 12% by year 2020. Our goal of decreasing smoking rates among adults in Denver will help reach this national goal.

### Why do we measure this?

We measure smoking rates to see if all of the work being done in Denver to decrease smoking is making an impact. If we don't see a decrease, adjustments to this work may be needed.



SOURCE: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey

### What is the story behind the graph?

It seemed that the smoking rate in Denver was decreasing between 2003 and 2010. We think this was partly caused by new laws which:

- Raised the tobacco product tax by \$0.64 per pack of cigarettes (2004).
- Passed the Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act to reduce secondhand smoke exposure in public places (2006).

Although the 2011/2012 smoking rates are higher than 2009/2010, this could be because cell phones were added to the survey in 2009/2010. Cell phones were added because more people began using them as their main, or only, telephone. This established a new baseline in 2011. As a result, we need more data to see if smoking rates are actually decreasing.

For more information, please contact [DPH.TobaccoTeam@dhha.org](mailto:DPH.TobaccoTeam@dhha.org)

## What works?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention list several strategies proven to reduce smoking, including:

- **Referral to cessation services.** Smokers who use nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), crave-reducing medications, and support services are more likely to quit and stay that way than those who quit cold-turkey.
- **Running advertising campaigns.** Mass media campaigns motivate smokers to quit and change attitudes about tobacco use, even among people who don't use tobacco.
- **Restricting youth access.** Making it harder for youth to obtain tobacco products prevents them from ever starting to smoke.
- **Passing laws to protect people from secondhand smoke.** Making more apartments and worksites smoke-free reduces the number of people exposed to secondhand smoke.



## What is our strategy?

Denver Public Health manages several projects to reduce smoking rates in Denver.

- Works closely with the Colorado QuitLine as a primary referral resource for those who are ready to quit. The QuitLine offers individuals one-on-one counseling over the phone and NRT, a combination proven to result in higher success rates in quitting.
- Partners with Denver Health and University of Colorado Behavioral Health to manage a Tobacco Cessation Clinic at Denver Health. The clinic uses intensive counseling, behavioral interventions, and a personalized medication plan. Because of the Affordable Care Act, which reduced out-of-pocket costs for preventative care, this service is affordable for Denver Health patients who want to quit.
- Manages a mass media campaign to stop teens from beginning to smoke. In its first year, the “Who’s Smokin’ Who?” campaign promoted a video contest with radio station KS107.5. To participate, teens submitted videos giving their reasons for not smoking. Video winners were featured in the second year of the campaign, which invited youth to submit a smoke-free text pledge.
- Coordinates the Licensed 2 Sell Tobacco Initiative, which focuses on protecting kids from illegal tobacco sales by supporting passage of a non-cigarette tobacco retail license in Denver.

## Who are our partners?

- Boys and Girls Club of Metro Denver
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Colorado QuitLine
- CU Behavioral Health
- Denver Health
- Denver Health Community Health Service Clinics

For more information, please contact [DPH.TobaccoTeam@dhha.org](mailto:DPH.TobaccoTeam@dhha.org)