

Western Wisconsin Working for Tobacco-Free Living

www.W3TFL.org

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Quarterly Coalition Meeting!

Our next W3TFL quarterly coalition meeting will be Thursday March 21, 2013 from 10:00am to 11:30am. The meeting will be held at the Polk County Health Department. 100 Polk County Plaza, Suite 180 Balsam Lake, WI.

Closing the loophole on OTP tax

Governor Walker's proposed budget maintains the current funding of \$5.3 million for the Tobacco Prevention and control program. There was hope that he would restore the program to \$6.2 million, which is the amount he proposed in his last budget when state finances were arguably tighter. One possible way to supplement the program's budget would be to close a tax loophole which allows so-called 'little cigars' and other non-cigarette tobacco products to be taxed at a much lower rate than cigarettes. Closing this loophole would reduce the affordability of these products for kids and prevent years of addiction and associated health problems.



Rep. Garey Bies, R-Sister Bay, is working with the state Department of Revenue to draft a tobacco tax-equity bill. His particular concern is the number of teens who continue to take up smoking. Among Wisconsin high school students, 46,500, or 13 percent, smoke, according to the state Department of Health Services' 2012 Youth Tobacco Survey. While this is a significant drop from the 35 percent of high schoolers who reported smoking in 2001, some 7,400 state teens start the habit annually, according to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

The state tax on a pack of cigarettes has been \$2.52 since 2009. Cigarillos, cigars and chewing tobacco, among the items collectively known as "other tobacco products" or OTPs, are taxed at 70 percent of their total cost. Typically, they cost less than cigarettes.

Those working to reduce tobacco use want all of these products to be taxed at the same rate.

Joint Finance

With the Joint Finance Meetings coming up this spring, Western Wisconsin Working for Tobacco Free living is looking for community members who are willing to speak at these meetings or write letters supporting tobacco prevention and control. Community members would share their experience with tobacco and why they think the program is important. If you are interested please contact Mary or Cortney who will aid you in this process.

Other Tobacco Products (OTPs) Presentations

If your organization/group is interested in learning more about other tobacco products (OTPs), please contact Mary or Cortney. We would love to come and do a presentation to spread the word!

CDC Vital Signs-Adult Smoking & Mental Health

Cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the US. Despite overall declines in smoking, more people with mental illness smoke than people without mental illness. Because many people with mental illness smoke, many of them will get sick and die early from smoking.

Recent research has shown that, like other smokers, adults with mental illness who smoke want to quit, can quit, and benefit from proven stop-smoking treatments. Some mental health providers and facilities have made progress in this area, while others are now beginning to address tobacco use. The 2006 Surgeon General's Report found that smoke-free policies reduce exposure to secondhand smoke and help smokers quit. Mental health facilities can benefit by making

their campuses 100% smoke-free and by making stopping tobacco use part of an overall approach to treatment and wellness. It is critical that people with mental illness get the mental health services they need and are able to get help to quit smoking to improve their overall health and wellness. To learn more and to see the whole infographic go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/SmokingAndMentalIllness/infographic.html>

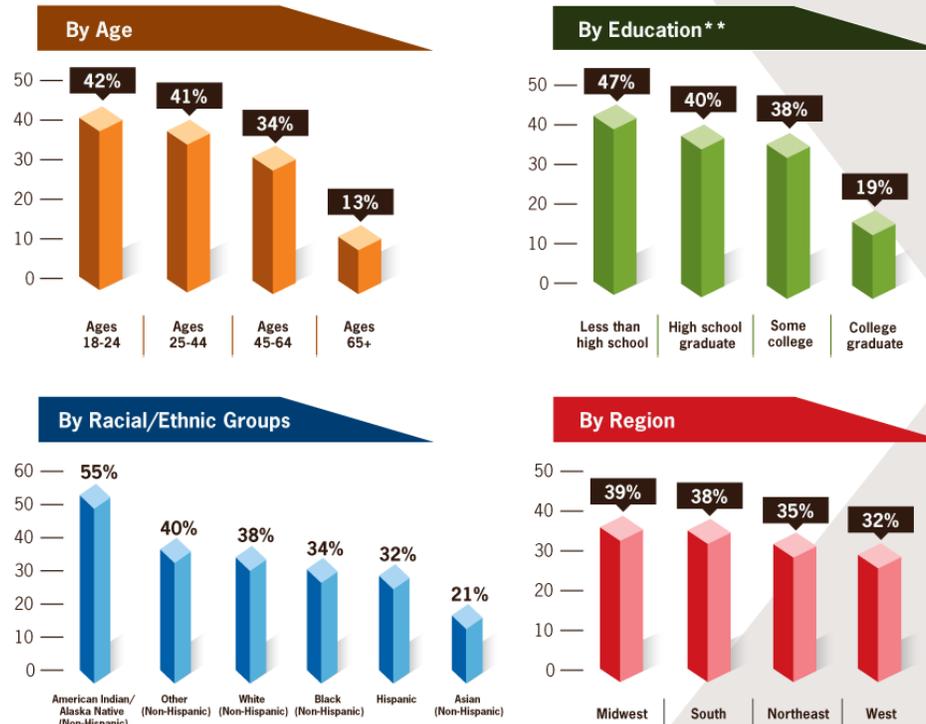
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Smoking Statistics for US Adults with Mental Illness



Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2009-2011, Adults ages 18 or older
** Source: National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2009-2011, Adults ages 25 or older