

# Fewer Teens Using Tobacco in 2002

## Teen tobacco use is declining

For the first time in over a decade, teen tobacco use is declining in Minnesota. *In the past two years, youth tobacco use is down 11 percent. That represents 13,800 kids who aren't using tobacco.* This decline demonstrates the early success of the Minnesota Youth Tobacco Prevention Initiative (MYTPI). The initiative is Minnesota's only statewide, comprehensive youth tobacco prevention program. Funded by the tobacco prevention endowment, it is a network of community-based and statewide grants that complement each other and create a whole that is bigger than the sum of its parts. The initiative's overall effectiveness is measured by changes in measurable outcomes. Each program within the initiative is also evaluated for its own program efficiency and improvement.

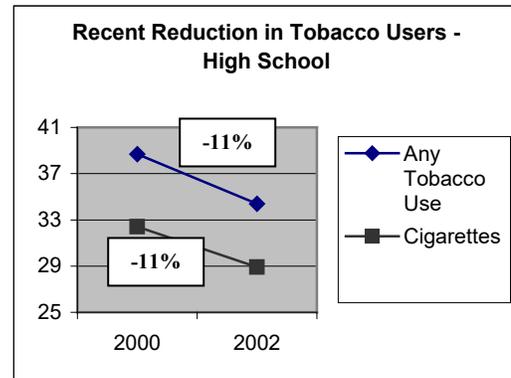
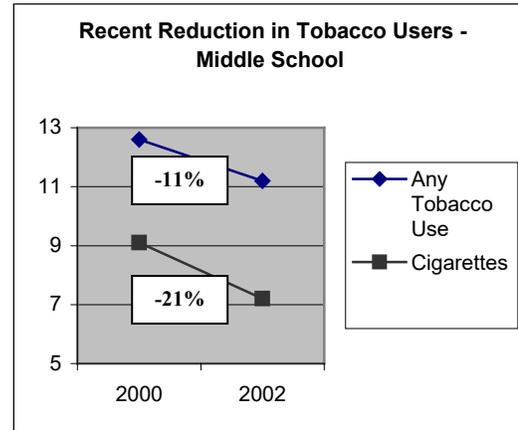
## Measuring success of the MYTPI

In establishing the initiative, the 1999 Legislature set the following program goal: *Reduce tobacco use among youth by 30 percent by the year 2005.* The Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey\* was developed to measure the initiative's success at meeting that goal. The following findings are based on responses from approximately 12,000 students and are representative of 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade public school students in Minnesota.

## Key results

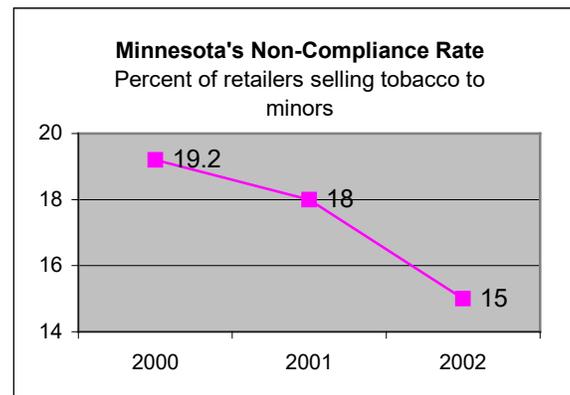
*Tobacco use has dropped among both middle and high school students.*

The use of any tobacco product by middle-school students and high-school students dropped by 11 percent between 2000 and 2002. The decrease in cigarette smoking for middle-school students was even more impressive, with a 21 percent drop.



## Fewer retailers are selling tobacco to minors

In 2002, a random check of retailers in Minnesota found that only 15 percent sold tobacco products to youth under age 18.



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For more information, see the *Tobacco Prevention and Local Public Health Endowment Annual Report to the Legislature: 2002 Activities* at [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/opa/tobacco.htm](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/opa/tobacco.htm)

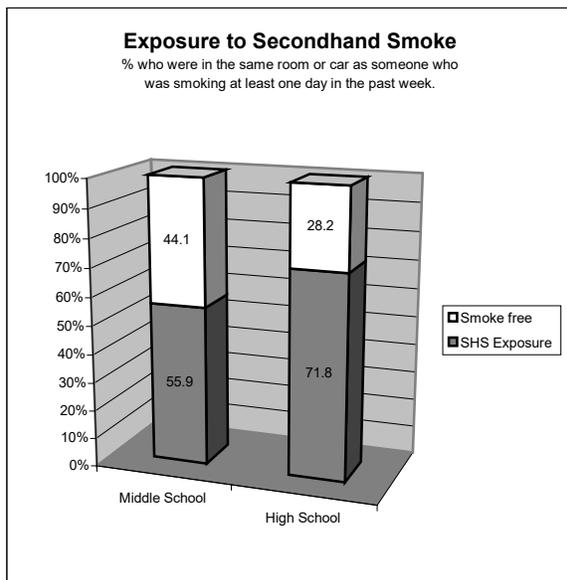
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### *More students in both middle and high schools classes are practicing ways to say ‘no’ to tobacco.*

In both middle school and high school, the number of students who practiced saying ‘no’ to tobacco in school has increased. In middle schools, over 50 percent of students, up 16 percent from 2000, had practiced saying ‘no’ at a time in their life when the pressure to begin smoking is the highest. A 39 percent increase in the number of high school students that practice refusal skills ensures that those skills remain strong well beyond their early teens.

### *Too many teens are still exposed to secondhand smoke.*

More than 70 percent of high-schoolers and 50 percent of middle-schoolers said they'd been exposed to secondhand smoke at least once during the previous week.



This shows that some people still haven't acted on the fact that secondhand smoke is harmful. The CDC and the majority of tobacco control researchers conclude that community efforts to prevent exposure to secondhand smoke, most notably clean indoor air regulations, are the most effective ways to both exposure to secondhand smoke and encourage cessation among current smokers.

### **MYTPI - on track to reach the 2005 goal**

The evaluation results from the Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey show that the initiative is on track to reach the goal of a 30 percent reduction in youth tobacco use by 2005.

***Reaching the 2005 goal will ultimately prevent 1,700 premature deaths and save \$480 million in health care costs every year in Minnesota.***

To ensure this success, the Initiative will continue to use a comprehensive approach that focuses on the middle school years to ensure that youth never start to smoke and that they are protected from the harms of secondhand smoke.

\* Methods - The MN YTS is a rigorous, scientific paper and pencil survey, consisting of questions on the prevalence of tobacco use, sources of tobacco products, and attitudes and beliefs about tobacco use, administered in randomly selected schools. The benchmark survey was administered in 2000, before the programs of the Initiative began, to determine baseline rates from which to measure Initiative success. The first follow-up survey was conducted in 2002, with the final follow-up scheduled for 2005.