THE TOLL OF TOBACCO IN VIRGINIA

Tobacco Use in Virginia

- High school students who smoke: NA  [Girls: NA  Boys: NA]
- High school males who use smokeless tobacco: NA
- Kids (under 18) who try cigarettes for the first time each year: 37,600
- Additional Kids (under 18) who become new regular, daily smokers each year: 16,500
- Packs of cigarettes bought or smoked by kids in Virginia each year: 21.7 million
- Kids exposed to second hand smoke at home: 336,000
- Percentage of workplaces that have smoke-free policies: 70.0%
- Adults in Virginia who smoke: 21.4%  [Men: 24.2%  Women: 18.8%]

National youth smoking rates have declined somewhat since 1997, but remain at historically high levels. The 2001 National Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance found that 28.5% of all U.S. high school kids smoke and 14.8% of high school males use spit tobacco. U.S. adult smoking rates have decreased gradually since the 1980s, and 23.3% of U.S. adults currently smoke.

Deaths in Virginia From Smoking

- Adults who die each year in Virginia from their own smoking: 9,100
- Annual deaths in state from others’ smoking (secondhand smoke & pregnancy smoking): 890 to 1,590
- Virginia kids who have lost at least one parent to a smoking-caused death: 6,900
- Kids alive in state today who will ultimately die from smoking: 134,000 (given current smoking levels)

Smoking kills more people each year than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined -- and thousands more die from other tobacco-related causes, such as secondhand smoke or spit-tobacco use. No good state-specific estimates are currently available, however, for the number of Virginia citizens who die from these other tobacco causes, or for the massive numbers who suffer from tobacco-caused health problems each year without actually dying.

Tobacco-Related Monetary Costs in Virginia

- Annual health care expenditures in the state directly caused by tobacco use: $1.62 billion
- State Medicaid program payments caused by tobacco use: $313 million
- Citizens’ state/federal taxes to cover smoking-caused gov’t costs: $1.31 billion ($508 per household)
- Smoking-caused productivity losses in Virginia: $2.08 billion
- State smoking-caused health costs and productivity losses per pack sold in Virginia: $5.57

Other non-health costs caused by tobacco use include direct residential and commercial property losses from smoking-caused fires (more than $500 million nationwide); the costs of the extra cleaning and maintenance made necessary by tobacco smoke and tobacco-related litter (about $4+ billion per year for commercial establishments alone); and additional work productivity losses from smoking-caused work absences, on-the-job performance declines, and disability during otherwise productive work lives (in the tens of billions nationwide) [productivity loss amount above is from smoking-death-shortened work lives, alone].

Tobacco Industry Advertising and Other Product Promotion

- Annual tobacco industry marketing expenditures nationwide: $9.7 billion ($26+ million per day)
- Estimated portion spent in Virginia each year: $242.4 million

Published research studies have found that kids are three times more sensitive to tobacco advertising than adults and are more likely to be influenced to smoke by cigarette marketing than by peer pressure, and that one-third of underage experimentation with smoking is attributable to tobacco company marketing.

State Government Policies Affecting The Toll of Tobacco in Virginia

- State per-capita 2002/2003 tobacco prevention spending: $3.09 (National rank: 16th)
- State cigarette tax per pack: 2.5c (National rank: 51st)  [States’ average is 58.8c per pack]
Sources


- Toll of Tobacco in the USA
- Comprehensive State Tobacco Prevention Programs Effectively Reduce Tobacco Use; and State Tobacco Prevention Programs Save Money
- Raising State Tobacco Taxes Always Increases State Revenues and Reduces Tobacco Use