

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### MAJOR FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

#### The Good News

##### Adult Smoking Rate

The overall smoking rate among all adults (age 18 and older) dropped to 18% in 2006, the first significant decrease since 2000.

*-2006 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System*

##### Youth Smoking Rate

The majority of students have never smoked a whole cigarette. In 2007, 29% of students reported having smoked a whole cigarette, down from 57% in 1997.

*-2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey*

##### Secondhand Smoke Exposure

89% of households with children prohibit smoking in the home in 2006. These voluntary prohibitions on smoking may indicate rising public awareness of the dangers of secondhand smoke as well as changing social norms concerning exposure to secondhand smoke.

#### The Bad News

Smoking rates among specific populations of Vermonters are higher than the overall adult smoking rate of 18%:

- 20% of pregnant women smoke.
- 30% of Vermonters living below 125% of the Federal Poverty Limit (FPL) smoke.
- 27% of Vermonters between the ages of 18-24 smoke.
- 44% of Vermonters with moderate or severe depression smoke.

Vermont is not likely to reach the state's 2010 goal of reducing the adult smoking rate to 11% with current efforts.

#### The Board's Budget Recommendation

The Vermont Tobacco Evaluation and Review Board recommends an increase of \$3.2 million for a total of \$8.4 million in tobacco control program funds for FY2009. This increase will address areas - in particular adult smoking cessation - that need to be enhanced in order to achieve the state's long-term objectives. Investment in the state's comprehensive tobacco control program is critical to improving the health and reducing health care costs of all Vermonters.

A concise overview of the specific recommendations is outlined on the next page.

This report details the significant progress that the statewide program has made, particularly in reducing the youth smoking rate and exposure to secondhand smoke. It also documents **positive trends** since 2001:

- **The majority of healthcare professionals talk to their patients about smoking.**
- **Media campaigns have increased awareness of smoking cessation services.**
- **More smokers are using nicotine replacement therapy in their quit attempts.**
- **Most Vermonters are aware of local programs aimed to prevent youth smoking.**

This report also discusses **four areas of concern**:

- **Most publicly insured and uninsured Vermonters do not know or are unsure if they are eligible for free nicotine replacement therapy.**
- **Although the majority of healthcare professionals talk to their patients about smoking, most do not refer their patients to a smoking cessation program or medication.**
- **Although the number of smokers enrolled in the hospital-based Ready, Set...STOP program and Quitline is increasing, total enrollment is only a small percentage of Vermonters who tried to quit smoking.**
- **The prevalence of quit attempts, of intentions to quit and, of confidence in quitting among adult smokers is not increasing.**

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### **The Board's Budget Recommendation: Program Enhancements**

The Tobacco Evaluation and Review Board recommends a \$3.2 million increase for a total of \$8.4 million in FY2009 to:

- Increase availability of free nicotine replacement therapy through the Quit Line and physicians' offices.
- Work with health care providers to increase the use of systems to identify and counsel smokers and to connect them to smoking cessation resources.
- Increase media efforts to encourage and motivate quit attempts among adults.
- Tailor smoking cessation programs to populations with higher smoking rates.
- Expand community tobacco coalitions to areas of the state that do not have access to coalition services; increase leadership and communication skills training.
- Expand media efforts to prevent youth from smoking.
- Explore new ways to reach smokers to encourage quit attempts and to seek treatment.
- Increase the number of educators licensed to teach health education.
- Expand enforcement of tobacco-related laws.

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The principal focus of this report is the results of the independent evaluation of Vermont's Tobacco Control Program. RTI International, who evaluates policy and program outcomes for Vermont and numerous other states, stated in 2006 and 2007:

“Youth smoking rates have decreased significantly in Vermont and the rate of decline has been considerably greater than the rate of the rest of the U.S.”

“While the [overall] adult smoking rate in Vermont [18%] remains lower than the average for the rest of the United States [20.8%], the rate of decline is not significantly different between Vermont and the rest of the United States.”

## VERMONT'S COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM

The Vermont Tobacco Control Program was created in FY2001 with the ambitious goal of cutting smoking rates in half in 10 years. The strategy to reach that goal was to implement a research-based, comprehensive program that includes components that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identified for successful statewide programs.

The seven components of the Vermont Tobacco Control Program are:

1. Tobacco-free community coalitions
2. School-based tobacco use prevention program
3. Services to help smokers quit
4. Statewide training for health care providers
5. Media and public education
6. Enforcement of laws to prevent tobacco sales to minors
7. Evaluation of outcomes and feedback to improve programs

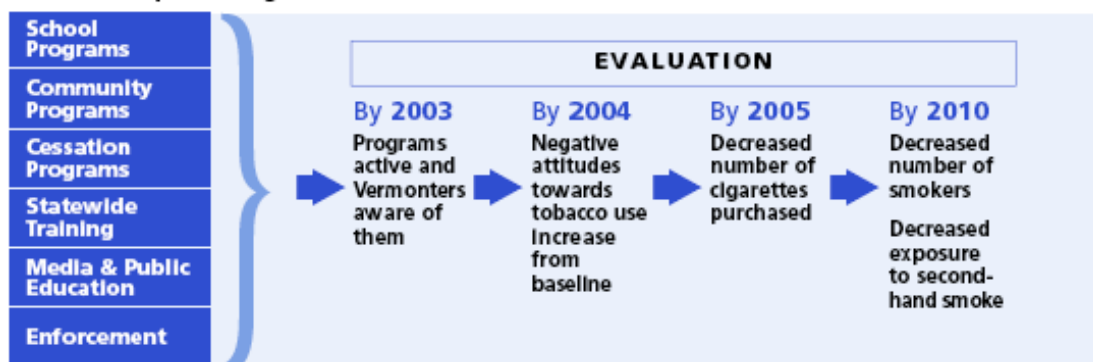
The program is funded with Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) funds appropriated to the following:

- Department of Health: community coalitions, smoking cessation services, statewide provider education, surveillance, media, and public education
- Department of Education: school-based tobacco use prevention program
- Department of Liquor Control: enforcement programs to educate retailers about tobacco sales laws and conduct compliance checks to assess adherence to the laws
- Tobacco Evaluation & Review Board: oversees the independent evaluation of the program, approves media campaigns, reviews applications for coalition grants, holds annual public meetings, provides annual recommendations for program funding, reviews program components and recommends strategies for increased collaboration

## EVALUATION OF STATEWIDE PROGRAM

At the outset of the program, a timeline was developed to provide benchmarks for evaluating progress toward the 2010 goals. Vermont's comprehensive tobacco control program was designed to have all components of the program act synergistically to effect changes in awareness, attitudes, and behaviors that lead to a 50% reduction in smoking by 2010.

Timeline of Expected Program Outcomes



The independent evaluation involves two types of tasks. The first focuses on the statewide program to determine if program outcomes - the changes in awareness, attitudes, and behaviors - are occurring as expected and as a result of program activities. The second focuses on each of the seven program components to assess if they are being implemented as planned and to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

## **EVALUATION OF PROGRAM COMPONENTS**

This report provides detailed information regarding the activities conducted and services provided through the tobacco control program. The report also includes evaluation data linking program activities with changes in attitudes and behaviors.

The standards against which the program components are assessed are the measurable objectives listed in the *Vermont 2008 & 2009 Tobacco Control Work Plan*. Listed below are a few of the findings, detailed in this report, from the evaluation of each of the program components.

### **Community Tobacco Coalitions**

- In FY2007, coalitions conducted 683 activities. 42% of the activities focused on youth prevention, 31% on smoking cessation and 19% on reduction to secondhand smoke exposure.
- 76% of Vermont smokers reported awareness of programs that help young people avoid smoking.

### **School-based Programs**

- 94% of schools had a tobacco-free policy in place in FY2007.
- 61% of schools provided students with evidence-based tobacco prevention curricula in FY2007.

### **Services to Help Smokers Quit**

- New clients served by the Ready, Set...STOP smoking cessation program at Vermont's hospitals totaled 1,936 in FY2007, an increase of 30% over the previous year.
- The percentage of callers to the Vermont Quit Line increased by 4% in FY2007 from FY2006.

### **Media and Public Education**

- 91% of all Vermonters reported awareness of at least one quit smoking media message in 2006.
- 86% of Vermont smokers reported a quit smoking ad made them think about whether or not they should smoke in 2006.

### **Enforcement of Laws to Prevent Tobacco Sales to Minors**

- In calendar year 2007, the Department of Liquor Control (DLC) completed 1,512 compliance checks.
- The rate of compliance (i.e. did not sell to minors) among tobacco licensees was 87% in calendar year 2007 and 88% in FY2007, above the federal requirement of 80% compliance but below the required rate of 90% compliance in Vermont.

**For a copy of the entire report, visit [www.humanservices.vermont.gov/tobacco](http://www.humanservices.vermont.gov/tobacco) or call 241-2555.**