

Smoking costs Indiana billions in productivity, health care

June 12 2012, By Marc Ransford

(Medical Xpress) -- As Indiana prepares for a statewide smoking ban on July 1, a new study from Ball State University finds that 21.2 percent of Hoosiers admit to regularly lighting up a cigarette, a habit costing the state nearly \$2.6 billion in productivity losses and \$2.2 billion in health care costs each year.

"[Burden of Smoking among Adults in Indiana](#)," a report by Ball State's Global Health Institute (GHI) based on 2010 data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), ranks the state 42nd worst in terms of percentage of population among the 50 states and District of Columbia.

"We have known for decades that smoking is counterproductive for our health and plays a major role for the spiraling [health care](#) costs facing both employees and their employers," said Kerry Anne McGeary, GHI director and Phyllis A. Miller professor of health economics. "When combined with our reports on obesity and asthma, on average Hoosiers have health issues and engage in health behaviors that put them at risk for future health conditions."

She pointed out that on average, about 9,700 deaths per year in Indiana are attributable to smoking while the habit is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, accounting for one in five deaths or about 443,000 each year.

"Smoking causes cancer, heart disease, stroke and lung disease —

ailments that are preventable simply by not lighting up in the first place," McGeary said. "Smoking kills half of its users. About one person dies every six seconds due to tobacco. This data sends a clear message to smokers that they are involved in a very dangerous habit."

The study also found:

- About 23.3 percent of males are currently smoking as compared to 19.3 of women.
- Adults older than 65 have the lowest smoking rate at 8 percent as compared to adults 18-24 years old at 21.2 percent; 25-44 years old at 26.1 percent; and 45-64 years old at 22.6 percent.
- About 30.1 percent of black adults regularly smoke as compared to 20.6 percent of white adults and 16.8 percent of Hispanic adults.
- Smoking rates decrease as income increases. Smokers make up 39.4 percent with household incomes of less than \$15,000, 30.9 percent with household incomes of \$15,000-\$24,999; 24.2 percent with household incomes of \$25,000-\$49,999; 16.6 percent with household incomes of \$50,000-\$74,999; and 11.1 percent with household incomes of more than \$75,000.

Smoking rates also decrease as education levels increase. About 35.1 percent with less than a high school education are smokers as compared to 25.3 percent of [adults](#) with a high school education, 24.8 percent with some college education, and 8.9 percent with a college education.

McGeary attributes anti-smoking policies as well as a combination of new tobacco taxes, anti-smoking campaigns and indoor clean air acts in playing a role in reducing the number of people taking up the habit.

The report found that percentage of current smokers in Indiana has dropped from about 29 percent in 1996 to 21.2 percent in 2010. About 60 percent of Hoosiers who smoke have tried to quit at least once, tying the national rate. In 1994, about 42 percent of Hoosiers tried to quit as compared to slightly more than 45 percent across the country.

"Smoking is a, dangerous [habit](#) that may be costly to everyone," McGeary said. "More and more people are seeking help to quit. The goal should always be to improve [health](#) among smokers. The largest marginal benefit can be achieved by quitting smoking. "

The statewide ban, passed by the Indiana General Assembly during the 2012 session, prohibits [smoking](#) inside a business — with exceptions for bars and casinos, among others — and within 8 feet of an entrance. Municipalities and businesses across the state can enact stronger smoke-free policies but starting July 1, no tobacco policy can be less restrictive.

Provided by Ball State University

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