

# Hawaii becomes first state to raise smoking age to 21

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(HealthDay)—Hawaii has become the first state to raise the legal

smoking age to 21 for both traditional and electronic cigarettes. State health officials hope the new law, effective Jan. 1, will make it harder for teenagers to try smoking or to develop the deadly habit, the *Associated Press* reported.

"In Hawaii, about one in four students in high school try their first cigarette each year, and one in three who get hooked will die prematurely," said Lola Irvin, administrator with the chronic disease prevention and health promotion division of the Hawaii Department of Health, according to the *AP*.

E-cigarettes were added to the legislation after officials saw the percentage of public [high school](#) students smoking the devices quadruple over four years, to 22 percent in 2015. Among middle schoolers, there was a six-fold increase in use during that same time period, to 12 percent in 2015, the *AP* reported.

More than 100 U.S. cities and counties have already raised the smoking age to 21, including New York City, according to the wire service. Several military bases in Hawaii said they would comply with the new state law.

**More information:** [Health Highlights: Jan. 4, 2016](#)

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