



**County
Health Officials
of New York**
Leading the way to healthier communities

SUPPORTS

GENERAL STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF LIMITING USE OF AND EXPOSURE TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS

The New York State Association of County Health officials (NYSACHO) supports legislation designed to limit use of, and exposure to, tobacco products.

A U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's 2014 report regarding tobacco use estimates that over 480,000 Americans die annually from tobacco-caused disease, making it *the* leading cause of preventable death. An additional 41,000 people die from exposure to secondhand smoke. According to the NYS Department of Health, smoking kills 23,600 New Yorkers every year. An additional 3000 individuals die annually as a result of exposure to secondhand smoke.

Each year, over a million children in NYS are exposed to secondhand smoke while at home. Children exposed to secondhand smoke:

- Are more likely to get ear infections;
- Have more breathing problems such as bronchitis and pneumonia;
- Have more frequent and severe asthma attacks if asthmatic
- May die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) as a result of exposure to second-hand smoke

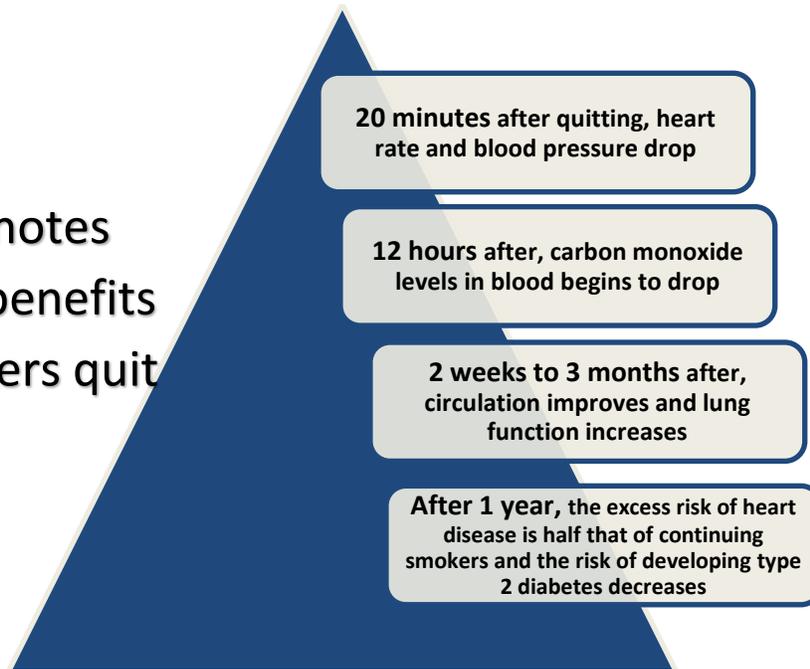
Tobacco use and its health consequences also adversely affect adults with mental illness and substance abuse disorders. People in this population typically die five years earlier than those without these disorders. The common causes of death in for individuals with mental illness include heart disease, cancer and lung disease, which can all be linked to smoking. Similarly, drug users who smoke are four times more likely to suffer a premature death. Tobacco use can also interact and reduce the effectiveness of some medications used to treat those with mental illness and substance abuse conditions

Tobacco products exact a high financial toll on New York taxpayers. Each year, New York spends an estimated \$10.4 billion on tobacco-related health care needs, of which Medicaid covers \$3.3 billion. An additional \$6 billion annually can be attributed to lost productivity from smoking.

Meanwhile, tobacco control saves lives and money. In its first year, the 2003 expansion of New York's Clean Indoor Air Act (CIAA) led to a significant decrease in hospital admissions for heart attacks, saving NYS an estimated \$56 million.

While the dollar savings can be significant, it is the health improvements that matter on an individual level.

The CDC notes significant benefits when smokers quit



The 2013-2017 State Prevention Agenda includes the following goals:

- Prevent initiation of tobacco use by New York youth and young adults, especially among low socioeconomic status (SES) populations.
- Promote tobacco use cessation, especially among low SES populations and those with poor mental health.
- Eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke

Elected officials can help further these goals through a number of evidence-based interventions, including:

- **Policy action to increase the age of purchase of tobacco products to 21**
- **Reduce the impact of tobacco marketing**
- **Increase tobacco-free outdoor spaces**
- **Keep the price of tobacco products uniformly high**
- **Fund expansion of Medicaid coverage of medications and type of provider eligible for reimbursement for tobacco dependence treatment**

They may also increase Tobacco Control Program funding to the CDC-recommended level as resources become available.

NYSACHO therefore supports legislative proposals that will further NYS Prevention Agenda goals around tobacco use to reduce the morbidity and mortality caused by tobacco products.

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