

# 2015 Public Outcomes Report: Tobacco use and cancer prevention

## *Middle and high school students in the Anoka-Hennepin School District*

Tobacco use, in any form, increases the risks for adverse health effects causing both immediate and long-term damage including nicotine addiction, cardiovascular disease, lung disease, stroke and multiple cancers. Tobacco use can also adversely affect fertility, infant morbidities and mortalities, bone health and nearly every other organ in the human body.

There are also many health concerns for those exposed to second and thirdhand smoke. The chemicals found in second and thirdhand smoke are known to cause adverse effects on respiratory and cardiovascular health, as well as lung and other cancers. The U.S. Surgeon General has stated that people only need to be around secondhand smoke for less than five minutes before it starts affecting their health and that no amount of secondhand smoke is safe.

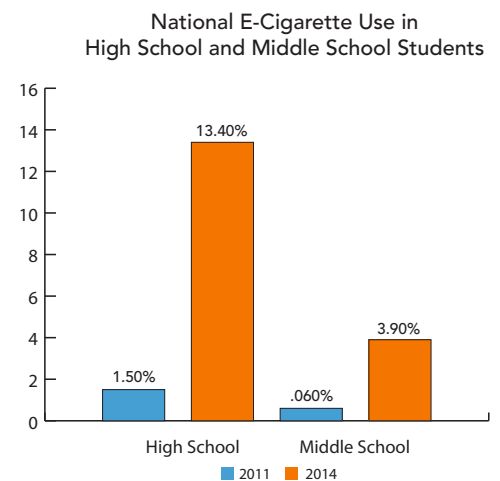
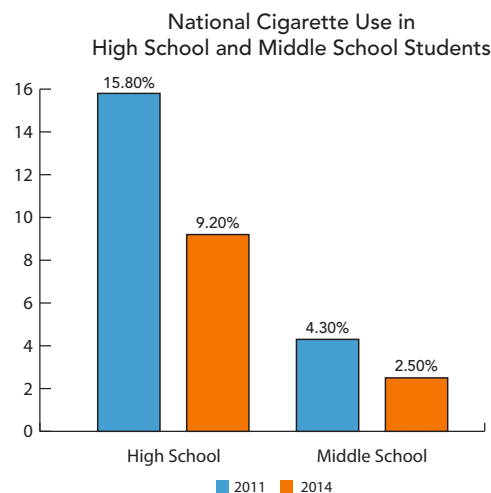
The vast majority of all tobacco users start using tobacco products before they graduate from high school. In fact, 90 percent of adult smokers begin using tobacco by 18. Tobacco companies are aware of this and market their products to teens, with age 13 being a key market. They spend 24 million dollars a day marketing their tobacco products. Competing with this message presents a significant challenge.

### NATIONAL STATISTICS ON TOBACCO USE

The National Youth Survey by the CDC indicated a decrease in cigarette use from 2011 to 2014, from 15.8 percent to 9.2 percent in high school students and from 4.3 percent to 2.5 percent in middle school students. However, the use of any tobacco product, which includes cigarettes, cigars, hookahs, smokeless tobacco and e-cigarettes, went up slightly in high schoolers from 24.2 percent in 2011 to 24.6 percent in 2014 and in middle schoolers from 7.1 percent in 2011 to 7.7 percent in 2014. The tobacco products that saw the biggest increase were e-cigarettes and hookahs. Among high schoolers, e-cigarette usage jumped from 1.5 percent in 2011 to 13.4 percent (2 million) in 2014 and among middle schoolers it went from 0.6 percent in 2011 to 3.9 percent (450,000) in 2014. An estimated 1.6 million high school students reported using a hookah in the last 30 days, which is double the amount from the previous year.

The significant decline in cigarette smoking among youth is positive progress for our nation's health. However, the skyrocketing use of e-cigarettes threatens this progress. Action is necessary to prevent kids from using any kind of tobacco product, not just cigarettes.

If current smoking rates continue, 5.6 million American children alive today will die prematurely. Strategizing new, additional or different ways to educate our middle and high school age children on the adverse effects of tobacco use, focusing on tobacco free kids today, is critical and vitally important in health care and in our community.



## TOBACCO USE AND CANCER

The National Cancer Institute reports tobacco use is the number one related cause of cancer and cancer related deaths in the United States. According to a 2013 study, smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer with 85 percent of all cases being current or former smokers. Other cancer types caused by tobacco use include larynx, mouth, esophagus, throat, bladder, kidney, liver, stomach, pancreas, colon and rectum, cervix and acute myeloid leukemia.

There are more than 7,000 chemicals in cigarette smoke and at least 69 of them are known to cause cancer. There is no safe use of tobacco products. Cancers caused by tobacco use are most effectively prevented by never starting to use tobacco of any kind. That is why it is so important to educate our youth on their harmful effects.

## TOBACCO USE PREVENTION WORK BY MERCY AND UNITY HOSPITALS

### *Nicotine Awareness Presentation (NAP)*

The Tobacco Intervention Program at Mercy and Unity hospitals, in collaboration with the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute, present interactive PowerPoint presentations to students during health classes at local high schools and middle schools. In 2015, more than 3,200 students participated in this presentation. Student feedback is very positive and includes recommendations to continue this work for future students.

The presentation covers cigarette and cigar smoking, smokeless tobacco (chewing tobacco, snuff, snus and dissolvable tobacco products) secondhand and thirdhand smoke, e-cigarettes and hookahs. The students have voting buttons and are encouraged to answer many questions about these products. This has proven to be a fun, interactive and anonymous way of learning. It also provides information about how much students know and/or don't know about tobacco products. Videos are shown to demonstrate how tobacco manufacturers target students and how students can fight back against tobacco manufacturers' efforts to replace adult tobacco users with young people. [The presentation includes](#) information and resources to help students quit and/or help someone else quit using tobacco products.

### *Standard 3.1 and the work done by the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute*

In addition to the work the Tobacco Intervention Program at Mercy and Unity hospitals is doing in local high schools, the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute developed a different approach piloted to one local middle school to measure its impact on this age group. In this presentation, the students [viewed a video](#) that featured a local woman's journey with her lung cancer diagnosis. The video also includes interviews with her children who talk about how their mothers' cancer and tobacco use affected their lives and future. The presentation's impact on this class was measured and analyzed. Changes will be made to the presentation using this analysis and it will be offered to other middle schools in the community in a further attempt to reach as many students in this age group as possible.

*Note: For more information about these programs and presentations, please contact [sandy.herrala@allina.com](mailto:sandy.herrala@allina.com)*

## CONCLUSION

As a health care community, we are taking the right steps to help the fight against tobacco. Tobacco education and conversations in our own community can help prevent cancers and have a positive impact on the future overall health of our students. Any work done to combat the efforts of tobacco manufacturers will require new approaches to engage young people. They will need facts about the choices available to them so they can make informed decisions for their lives. We will continue to refine our work to meet these needs.

For more information on tobacco use in youth, please visit these online resources:

[American Cancer Society](#)

[National Cancer Institute](#)

[Center for Disease Control](#)

[tobaccofreeteens.org](http://tobaccofreeteens.org)