

Jan. 25, 2011

Media contact: Christine Stone, 971 673-1282, desk; 503-602-8027, cell;  
[christine.l.stone@state.or.us](mailto:christine.l.stone@state.or.us).

## **As Oregon cigarette sales drop, so do tobacco-related cancers** *Oregon Tobacco Facts & Laws annual report released today*

The success of Oregon Public Health's tobacco prevention and education program is contributing to a drop in cigarette sales that's fueling a decrease in tobacco-related cancer deaths, new state data reveal.

Tobacco-related cancer deaths went from 93.6 per 100,000 population between 1996 and 2001 to 89.2 per 100,000 between 2002 and 2007, a 4.7 percent drop, according to the Oregon Tobacco Prevention & Education Program's *2011 Oregon Tobacco Facts & Laws* report released today. The number of new tobacco-related cancer diagnoses dropped during the same period, from 150.8 to 146.8 per 100,000, a decline of 2.7 percent.

At the same time, Oregon saw a 48 percent decrease in per-capita cigarette purchases between 1996 and 2009, compared with a 40 percent drop nationwide during that time. Today, 3.4 billion fewer cigarettes are sold each year in Oregon than would be if use had not declined.

Oregon Public Health officials attribute the declines to comprehensive tobacco prevention and education programs that helped drive a shift in attitude about smoking in the state. They include policy work, such as that on Oregon's Smokefree Workplace Law that protects nearly 100 percent of Oregonians on the job; offering cessation resources through the Oregon Tobacco Quit Line; supporting tobacco control efforts at all counties and tribes, many of which passed policies banning smoking at college campuses, housing, parks and fairs; and funding anti-tobacco media campaigns.

"These numbers clearly show our efforts are working. We're helping reduce health care costs, and more importantly, we're saving lives," said Katrina Hedberg, M.D., M.P.H., state epidemiologist.

Secondhand smoke exposure also continues to drop, largely because of the Smokefree Workplace Law. And smokefree homes have become the norm, with 91 percent of adults reporting no one is allowed to smoke in the home.

“It’s a step in the right direction, but we’re far from finished,” added Hedberg, administrator of the Office of Disease Prevention and Epidemiology, Oregon Public Health Division, which is part of the Oregon Health Authority. She points to several red flags raised in the new report:

- While cigarette sales are dropping, the number of people smoking is staying steady.
- Only 46 percent of smokers with children say that smoking is never allowed in any of their cars.
- Hookah tobacco smoking by Oregon teenagers also is on the rise, while use of all other forms of tobacco by teens is decreasing or staying the same.

Plus, tobacco companies spend \$134 million per year marketing their products to Oregonians. In contrast, tobacco prevention and education is funded with less than \$8 million a year. “We have to continually counter tobacco industry efforts to keep Oregonians addicted,” Hedberg said.

Tobacco prevention and education is one of several areas the Oregon Health Authority considers essential to achieving one of its goals: preventing diseases to save an estimated \$1 billion a year in health care costs.

###

The Oregon Tobacco Prevention and Education Program, funded by state tobacco taxes, works with local health departments, tribes, schools and community organizations to deliver a comprehensive tobacco prevention program to all Oregon residents. These program activities are based on evidence-based strategies to reduce and prevent tobacco use. View the full report at [www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/tobacco/docs/tobfacts.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/tobacco/docs/tobfacts.pdf).

Additional resources for media:

- Brett Hamilton, Tobacco-Free Coalition of Oregon: 503-740-0820, [brett.w.hamilton@gmail.com](mailto:brett.w.hamilton@gmail.com)
- Colleen Hermann-Franzen, American Lung Association in Oregon: 503-718-6145, [chermann@lungoregon.org](mailto:chermann@lungoregon.org)
- Jason Parks, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network: 503-795-3955, [jason.parks@cancer.org](mailto:jason.parks@cancer.org)
- Stephanie Tama-Sweet, American Heart Association: 503-595-2278, [Stephanie.Tama-Sweet@heart.org](mailto:Stephanie.Tama-Sweet@heart.org)