

Parents support ban on secondhand smoke in public places, higher cigarette taxes

February 12, 2008 — The results of an annual survey show that North Carolina parents support stepping up the state's anti-smoking efforts, including higher cigarette taxes and no-smoking policies in public places frequented by youth.

Actions to prevent and reduce youth tobacco use are "very important" to 90 percent of the parents surveyed, and another 8 percent agree they were "somewhat important," said Dr. Adam Goldstein, professor of family medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine and director of its Tobacco Prevention and Evaluation Program. The program analyzed the results of the survey, which was conducted in 2006.

"When you look at all these results, it shows that almost all North Carolina parents think it is critical to take actions to prevent teens from using tobacco," Goldstein said. "This research should stimulate policy makers to increase their investment of state funds in tobacco use prevention and cessation."

The North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics collected the data as part of the center's annual surveillance system, the Child Health Assessment and Monitoring Program (CHAMP), which began in 2005 to measure health characteristics of children from birth to age 17. Topics covered in the survey include breastfeeding; health care access; oral, mental, and physical health; nutrition; physical activity; and parents' opinions about tobacco, obesity and other issues.

The 2006 CHAMP survey included five additional questions measuring parents' opinions related to tobacco and their awareness of the state's youth-focused tobacco prevention media campaign, called Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered., or TRU, funded by the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund.

Results showed that:

- 85 percent of parents strongly support and 11 percent moderately support tobacco-free policies in their children's schools so that no one – students, teachers, staff or visitors – could smoke or use other tobacco products on the school grounds at any time. (In the summer of 2007, the state passed legislation mandating tobacco-free policies in all NC school districts by August 2008.)
- 85 percent of parents strongly support and 11 percent moderately support tobacco-free policies in indoor recreational areas, such as skating rinks and bowling alleys, and in fast food restaurants where their children play, work or eat.
- 66 percent of parents strongly support and 16 percent moderately support increasing state cigarette taxes to reduce youth access to tobacco.
- 59 percent of NC parents reported hearing about or seeing the NC Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered. (TRU) media campaign directed at preventing tobacco use among youth.

TRU campaign Web site: www.tobaccorealityunfiltered.com

CHAMP Web site: <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/champ/index.html>

Full report on the CHAMP tobacco questions: <http://fammed.unc.edu/TPEP/>

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