

# **Tobacco Prevention in Texas**



**Texas Department of State Health Services  
Report to the Governor and Legislative Budget Board**

**October 2008**

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# **Tobacco Prevention in Texas: Report to the Governor and Legislative Budget Board**

## **Department of State Health Services Rider 66 – 80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature**

Tobacco use among Texas adults and youth remains a serious public health problem, contributing to and/or causing many preventable illnesses and deaths. To combat this problem, the 80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature directed the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to implement Rider 66, General Appropriations Act of the 80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature (2007). Rider 66 requires the department to create a competitive statewide grant program allowing all Texas city and county health departments and local independent school districts to apply for funding. DSHS was also required to publish or make available via the Internet a resource list identifying best practice and evidence-based interventions in tobacco prevention, cessation, and enforcement for use by entities receiving state appropriated funds. Finally, DSHS was expected to notify the Comptroller of Public Accounts regarding violations of state tobacco laws when they were observed during the administration of the annual federal Synar survey.

Rider 66 directs DSHS to prepare a report on its progress in the following areas:

- (1) the number and amount of grants issued to communities to implement comprehensive tobacco prevention efforts,
- (2) the number of Texas communities implementing a comprehensive tobacco prevention program,
- (3) the youth and adult tobacco use rate in communities implementing comprehensive programs,
- (4) the statewide youth and adult tobacco use rates,
- (5) the number of Texans accessing cessation resources, and
- (6) the number of Texans exposed to tobacco prevention advertising.

The rider also requires the report to include an overview and evaluation of the state's tobacco prevention and enforcement progress and recommendations to improve the state's efforts.

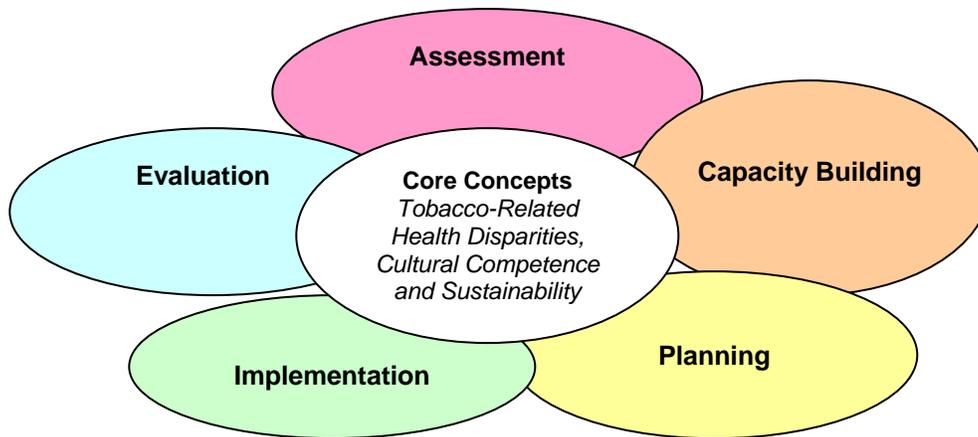
This report meets the requirements of Rider 66 and also includes information regarding DSHS' activities outside of DSHS Rider 66, such as DSHS Rider 72 regarding tobacco prevention in schools, and DSHS Rider 81 relating to smokeless tobacco prevention.

## **Statewide Comprehensive Tobacco Prevention Community Grant Program**

In September 2007, DSHS announced the availability of tobacco funds through a Request for Proposals (RFP) for city and county health departments and independent school districts to organize and manage community Tobacco Prevention and Control Coalitions (TPCC). The purpose of these coalitions is to provide evidence-based environmental tobacco prevention and control activities. In February 2008, six contracts were awarded to develop a comprehensive program to meet the DSHS tobacco program goals:

- Goal 1: Prevent tobacco use among young people.
- Goal 2: Ensure compliance with state and local tobacco laws with adequate enforcement.
- Goal 3: Increase cessation among young people and adults.
- Goal 4: Eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Goal 5: Reduce tobacco use among populations with the highest burden of tobacco-related health disparities.
- Goal 6: Develop and maintain statewide capacity for comprehensive tobacco prevention and control.

To guide their planning and implementation, the coalitions use the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *Best Practices for Tobacco Prevention and Control* and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) *Strategic Prevention Framework*.



Texas Strategic Prevention Framework

## Tobacco Prevention and Control Coalitions

In FY08, these grant-funded coalitions initiated the Strategic Prevention Framework planning model to conduct a comprehensive community approach to reducing tobacco use and consequences. The Strategic Prevention Framework required an in-depth needs assessment on:

- Measuring community tobacco use and tobacco-related health consequences among young people and adults;
- Mobilizing community stakeholders to build local capacity to address identified needs; and
- Developing a strategic plan for comprehensive activities that will be implemented in FY09.

The local tobacco coalitions are also evaluating evidence-based tobacco prevention and cessation strategies implemented to address tobacco use among adults and young people.

Since receiving funding in February 2008, the six tobacco prevention coalitions have entered into 150 written agreements with local community stakeholders. These agreements are intended to

enhance each community’s ability to more effectively provide tobacco prevention, cessation, and second-hand smoke strategies through community mobilization, capacity building, and empowerment. Through alternative activities, such as Tobacco-Free Kids Day events, the coalitions have reached over 44,000 youth. The coalitions have consulted with 831 local health care providers to educate them on the use of *YES YOU CAN: A Clinical Toolkit for Treating Tobacco Dependence*. They have also visited 398 worksites to encourage smoke-free policies and to promote the American Cancer Society’s Quitline cessation services. In addition to the six DSHS funded coalitions, two communities, El Paso and Amarillo, currently fund comprehensive tobacco programs using local foundation or hospital district funding, respectively.

Tobacco Prevention and Control Coalitions

<b>HHS Region</b>	<b>Tobacco Prevention and Control Coalition</b>	<b>Counties Served</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>FY09 Funding</b>
1	Lubbock-Cooper ISD	Lubbock, Crosby, Dickens, Hale, Hockley, Lynn, and Terry	363,847	\$220,380
4	Northeast Texas Public Health District  <i>The Northeast Texas Public Health District is combining efforts with an existing CDC funded coalition at the East Texas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. These CDC funds pass through DSHS.</i>	Smith and Gregg	359,202	\$114,910  \$68,030
6	Fort Bend County Health and Human Service	Fort Bend	489,074	\$227,731
7	City of Austin Health and Human Services	17 zip codes in Eastern Travis Co.	346,000	\$289,704
8	San Antonio Metropolitan Health District	Bexar	1,541,881	\$825,336
9	Ector County Health Department	Ector and Midland	250,971	\$ 163,607
<b>Total</b>			<b>3,350,975</b>	<b>\$1,909,698</b>

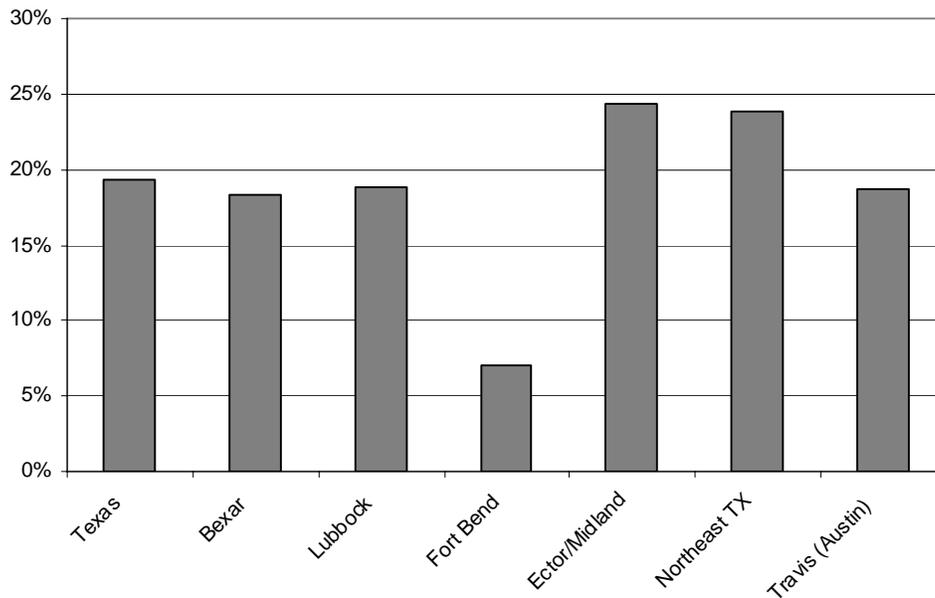
Note: FY09 funding includes initial contract amounts awarded to each coalition.

## Adult Tobacco Use Rates

According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data, the rate of tobacco use among Texas adults was 19.3% in 2007. Ector/Midland counties in West Texas and Gregg/Smith counties in Northeast Texas have rates of tobacco use higher than that of Texas. Ector/Midland was the highest at 24.4%.

### 2007 Adult Tobacco Use Rates in Texas and the Tobacco Prevention Coalition Communities

**2007 Adult Tobacco Use**



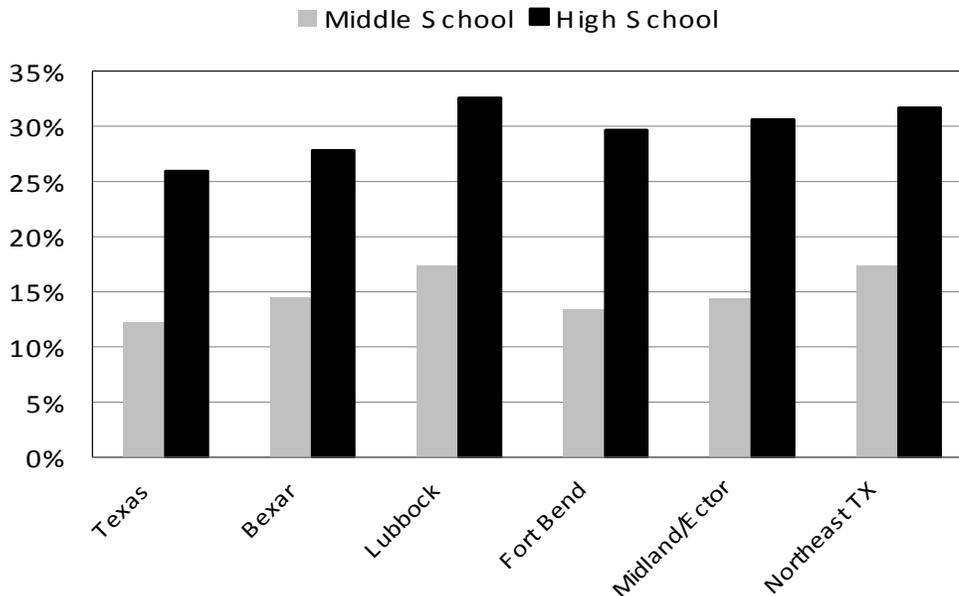
## Youth Tobacco Use Rates

According to the 2008 Youth Tobacco Survey, all tobacco program target communities were found to be above the state rate for current tobacco use among middle and high school students. While Fort Bend County had the lowest rate for middle school students and Bexar County had the lowest rate for high school students, Lubbock and surrounding counties had the highest rates of current tobacco use for high school students. Northeast Texas and Lubbock and surrounding counties had similarly high rates of current tobacco use among middle school students. The Austin Independent School District declined to participate in the 2008 Youth Tobacco Survey due to time constraints within the district.

The overall youth tobacco use rates (middle school and high school) in Texas have dropped from 24.7% in 2006 to 20.0% in 2008 indicating significant progress having been made in reducing tobacco use among youth during this period.

## 2008 Youth Tobacco Use Rates in Texas and the Tobacco Prevention Coalition Communities

### 2008 Texas Youth Tobacco Survey Current Any Tobacco Use



## Statewide Tobacco Prevention and Enforcement

### School-based Prevention

Tobacco prevention education is provided for individual youth in grades 4 to 12 through a \$3 million annual interagency contract with the Texas Education Agency (DSHS Rider 72, House Bill 1, 80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature). The tobacco prevention education program is implemented through the 20 regional Education Service Centers that are providing training and curriculum materials for two programs, “The Short Story of Life” and “Toward No Tobacco Use.”

### Smokeless Tobacco Prevention

The *Spit It Out* Media and Outreach Campaign (DSHS Rider 81, House Bill 1, 80<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature) was launched at the Texas FFA Association Convention in Lubbock in July 2008. Approximately 10,000 youth from across the state attended the FFA convention where over 500 youth signed pledges to remain tobacco-free at the *Spit It Out* outreach booth. The Texas FFA Association director, along with a Lubbock teenager and the deputy director of the regional health office, held a press conference at the event and introduced the smokeless tobacco prevention campaign. The campaign resulted in media coverage that reached over 178,000 Texans. An educational prevention program is also conducted in rural communities statewide by the 11 regional Prevention Resource Centers to prevent the use of smokeless tobacco products. The Prevention Resource Centers reached over 23,000 youth and adults with information and presentations. In FY09, the smokeless prevention initiative will be promoted to Texas FFA through their web site, newsletter and convention. Additionally, a curriculum, *SOS: Spotlight on Smokeless*, will be targeted to rural school districts working with vocational agriculture (FFA) teachers.

### Texas Teen Ambassador Program

The Texas Teen Ambassadors are a network of well-trained, educated, and committed high school-aged youth advocates that provide the youth voice regarding tobacco use and secondhand smoke. Teen Ambassadors provide guidance to DSHS tobacco program on the state's tobacco prevention efforts including youth prevention media campaigns. They appear on television and radio talk shows and give presentations at public events on behalf of tobacco prevention. Many of these youth have witnessed the devastating effects of tobacco use first-hand through illnesses or deaths of family members. There are also currently 14 Teen Ambassadors and 7 college-aged youth that are former Teen Ambassadors who continue to be involved as consultants. In 2008, the Teen Ambassadors reached over 8,000 of their peers through local prevention activities.

### Texas Teen Tobacco Summit and Comprehensive Tobacco Prevention Conference

This conference is held annually in late July and provides best practice training for effective tobacco use prevention and cessation programming. In 2008, 357 adults including 66 adults acting as youth sponsors, 70 law enforcement officers, and 231 youth representing 51 organizations attended. This event assembles tobacco-control professionals, researchers, healthcare providers, community coalition members, law enforcement officers, counselors, teachers, and young people dedicated to protecting Texas youth from the dangers of tobacco use and helping those who smoke to quit.

### Regional Texas Teen Tobacco Summits

These weekend summits train and equip community and school-based organizations to invest in youth and create positive social change at the local level. Summit participants receive prevention training to guide them to address local community conditions that contribute to youth tobacco use. In the spring of 2008, summits were conducted for 787 youth statewide in seven camp settings.

### Texas Tobacco-Free Kids Day

Tobacco-Free Kids Day is held annually in Texas in conjunction with the national Kick Butts Day event sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. This tobacco awareness day encourages students of all ages to live tobacco-free lifestyles. Schools and organizations receive an activity guide to use in their community or school. On April 2, 2008, the second annual youth leadership event associated with Tobacco-Free Kids Day reached 123,109 youth. Plans for FY09 Tobacco-Free Kids Day include a youth summit in Austin.



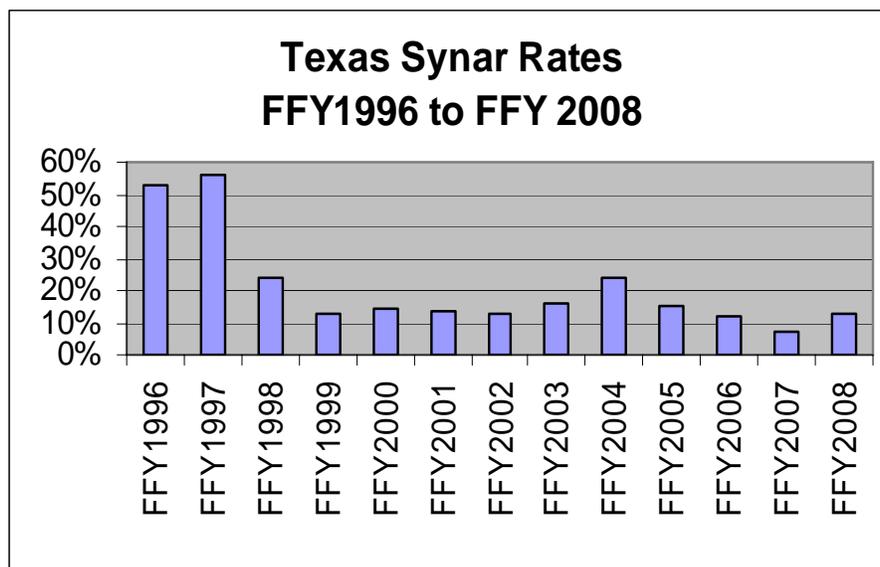
The Teen Ambassador Program, tobacco prevention conference, teen summits, and Texas Tobacco-Free Kids Day activities detailed above are conducted through a contract with the Center for Safe Communities and Schools at Texas State University – San Marcos.

(<http://cscs.txstate.edu/cscs/cscs-tobacco.htm> )

#### Comptroller of Public Accounts Collaboration for Tobacco Law Enforcement

In Texas, the Comptroller of Public Accounts (Comptroller) is the agency responsible for enforcement of the Texas tobacco laws. Through a memorandum of agreement and an interagency contract with the Department of State Health Services, the Comptroller works with DSHS to prevent youth access to tobacco products. Federal legislation, known as the Synar Regulation, requires annual random inspections of tobacco retailers to ensure 20% or fewer retailers are in violation of tobacco laws. Non-compliance with the federal requirement could result in a major financial penalty (40%) to the state’s Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant funding.

In Texas, the Comptroller’s office works in partnership with local law enforcement agencies to educate the public and enforce compliance. DSHS conducts the annual Synar Survey to determine the annual retailer violation rate. Through the coordinated efforts of the Comptroller’s office and DSHS, the sales rate to minors has seen an overall decrease since Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 1997. The rate in FFY 2008 of illegal sales to minors for the state was 13.4%. DSHS has established a protocol to alert the Comptroller during the annual Synar Survey to ensure local law enforcement is notified of local retailer violations. One hundred and fifty retailer violations during the 2008 Synar Survey were reported to local law enforcement for follow-up enforcement activities.



Rate of Illegal Sales of Tobacco Products to Minors by Texas Retailers

In FY08, through grants funded by the Comptroller’s office, 98 local law enforcement agencies and 85 school districts with school-based police provided compliance education to about 1.4 million minors, retailers, court personnel, parents, educators, and law enforcement officers.

Local law enforcement grantees educated 6,866 tobacco retailers. The Comptroller's law enforcement grantees conducted 8,335 controlled buys using youth inspectors, resulting in 626 violations for retailer sales to minors. To support the efforts of Comptroller funded law enforcement, in FY08, the DSHS 11 regional Prevention Resource Centers contacted 12,852 tobacco retailers to provide education and ask for voluntary compliance with Texas tobacco law. During the year, the Prevention Resource Centers and other DSHS-funded prevention programs facilitated 2,250 prevention presentations to 16,761 adults and 71,401 youth in local communities across the state. Local law enforcement is further supported by a media campaign, *Enforcing It is Easy*. In FY09, the Comptroller's office has increased the number of law enforcement agencies participating in the tobacco grant program by 35% to 128 law enforcement grantees and 120 school districts with school-based police to enforce the Texas tobacco laws.

#### Texas Youth Tobacco Awareness Program

If a minor (under 18) has been cited for violating Texas tobacco laws, the court may send them to a state-certified tobacco awareness/cessation class. The Texas Youth Tobacco Awareness Program is responsible for ensuring that Texas youth are offered a tobacco awareness course as mandated by the 75th Texas Legislature through the Texas Health & Safety Code, Sec.161.253. These classes consist of 8 hours over two weeks and use the Texas Adolescent Tobacco Use and Cessation curriculum. Last year, 1,997 youth enrolled in Texas Youth Tobacco Awareness Program classes, which are administered by the Department of State Health Services through an interagency contract with the Comptroller's office

#### The Texas Tobacco Prevention Hotline

DSHS maintains the Texas Tobacco Prevention Hotline (1-800-345-8647) to encourage citizens in local communities to report violations of the minors and tobacco law. Citizens can call toll-free to report a merchant selling tobacco products to minors, tobacco advertising within 1,000 feet from a church or school, or a cigarette vending machine that is accessible to minors. Once the service determines the nature of the violation reported, the caller is transferred to the proper authority. The service is available 24 hours per day and is provided bilingually.

#### Texas Tobacco Law Website

The Texas Tobacco Law website provides information on the Texas tobacco laws. There is an online Texas Youth Tobacco Awareness Program class locator for youth cited for violating the minors in possession of tobacco laws. This site also includes external links to resources related to the Texas laws limiting youth access to tobacco products (<http://www.texastobaccolaw.org/>).

### **Accessing Cessation Services**

CDC's *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs, October 2007*, states the case for smoking cessation activities.

- Tobacco use screening and brief interventions by clinicians are not only top-ranked clinical preventive services relative to health impact and effectiveness, but also cost-effectiveness.
- Interventions that increase quitting tobacco use can decrease premature mortality and tobacco-related health care costs in the short term.

- Tobacco use treatment is more cost-effective than other commonly provided clinical services, including mammography, colon cancer screening, Pap tests, treatment of mild to moderate hypertension, and treatment of high cholesterol.
- Quitting by age 30 eliminates nearly all excess risk associated with smoking, and smokers who quit smoking before age 50 cut in half their risk of dying from smoking related causes during the next 15 years.

#### American Cancer Society's Quitline Services

DSHS has funded the telephone Quitline since 2000. The Quitline provides telephone counseling, tobacco education and limited nicotine replacement therapy to Texas residents. The American Cancer Society is currently using a five-session intervention that assists callers in assessing their nicotine dependence, setting a quit date, and providing longer-term support if necessary. Nicotine replacement therapy is available in the targeted coalition communities and through a physician fax referral program that is available statewide. Over 3,000 Texans accessed Quitline cessation services in FY08. The Quitline also has separate contracts for similar services within Texas including agreements with the Paso de Norte Foundation, and the City of San Antonio employee wellness program.

#### Cessation Activities by DSHS-Funded Coalitions

Cessation efforts by the Tobacco Prevention and Control Coalitions educate the public and encourage healthcare providers to take a more active role in promoting patient cessation. Coalitions consulted with more than 800 healthcare providers in 2008. The *Yes You Can!* Cessation Tool Kit was developed by DSHS and promotes changes in clinical practice regarding tobacco assessment and referrals to appropriate counseling and resources. The toolkit is supported by the *Yes You Can!* media campaign. All *Yes You Can!* materials promote the American Cancer Society Quitline telephone counseling service.

### **Health Communications**

CDC's *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs, October 2007*, reports that health communication interventions can be powerful tools for preventing smoking initiation, promoting and facilitating cessation, and shaping social norms related to tobacco use. CDC recommends that effective messages, targeted appropriately, can stimulate public support for tobacco control interventions and create an encouraging climate for community-based prevention efforts.

Developed through a contract with Enviromedia Social Marketing, the following targeted media campaigns support tobacco prevention and cessation efforts in Texas. The number of Texans reached with tobacco prevention advertising for these campaigns is estimated based on the Nielsen Ratings and/or Arbitron Ratings and indicates the number of persons who see or hear the spot.

#### *DUCK – Tobacco is Foul*

This campaign targets 9-12 year olds through outreach activities; a web site; and television, radio, Internet, and theater advertisements. The campaign's goal is to prevent youth from experimenting with tobacco and to motivate those who are already experimenting to quit.

Messages emphasize tobacco's negative consequences on appearance, social life, and health. Some materials are available in Spanish. DUCK advertising on television, cable, and radio resulted in 405,464 youth viewing or hearing these messages multiple times in the Tobacco Prevention and Control Coalitions' target areas. ([www.ducktexas.org](http://www.ducktexas.org))

### WorthIt?

The *WorthIt?* campaign targets teenagers 13-17, with a secondary audience of adults. *Worth It?* presents the facts about tobacco use and its consequences and challenges teens to decide for themselves. The campaign includes television, radio, mall, and theater advertising placements, some of which are in Spanish. The *WorthIt?* campaign ads were seen or heard multiple times by over 107,363 Texans in the Tobacco Prevention and Control Coalitions' target areas.

([www.worthit.org](http://www.worthit.org))

### Spit It Out

This educational campaign was designed to prevent smokeless tobacco use by Texas youth in rural areas. The campaign consists of youth-oriented outreach, a web resource for teens, and television, radio, and online advertising. The campaign was launched in conjunction with the Texas FFA Association's annual conference, which drew over 10,000 teenagers from across the state. *Spit It Out* cable and radio advertising in 16 markets from Lubbock to Harlingen-McAllen was seen or heard multiple times by a total of 1,043,669 people in rural areas of Texas.

([www.spititouttexas.org](http://www.spititouttexas.org))

### Enforcing It Is Easy

A companion to *Worth It?*, this campaign targets tobacco retailers, parents, and other Texas adults. It is intended to remind them of their responsibilities under the Texas Tobacco Law, which prohibits sale or distribution of tobacco products to minors. "Enforcing It Is Easy" web-banner advertising, conducted in six markets, including Amarillo, Abilene, Waco, Lufkin-Nacogdoches, Tyler- Longview, and Laredo, was seen or heard multiple times by 91,262 Texans.

### Yes You Can!;/SÍ Se Puede!

This statewide campaign encourages Texas adults to take the first steps to quit tobacco by seeking the support and information they need through family, health care providers, and the American Cancer Society's toll-free Quitline. Blue-collar adult males have the highest rate of tobacco use in Texas and are the primary target audience, but the message is applicable to all smokers who wish to quit. This campaign includes television, radio, print, and outdoor advertising, with some ads available in Spanish. Increased call volume to the American Cancer Society Quitline was attributed to the *Yes You Can!* campaign. Television advertising in English and Spanish along with radio advertising, was seen or heard by 2,919,779 Texans in the coalition target markets. The media campaign supports local coalition cessation interventions with health care providers, worksites, local school districts, and others. (<http://www.yesquit.com>)

### Share Air

The *Share Air* media campaign educates the public about dangers of secondhand smoke. Television, radio, outdoor, theater, Internet and print advertisements are available in English and Spanish, and a web site provides additional resources. The statewide campaign debuted in 2006

through the Texas Association of Broadcasters. The 2008 Share Air educational campaign was seen or heard by 214,872 persons in the Tyler-Longview and Lufkin-Nacogdoches markets.

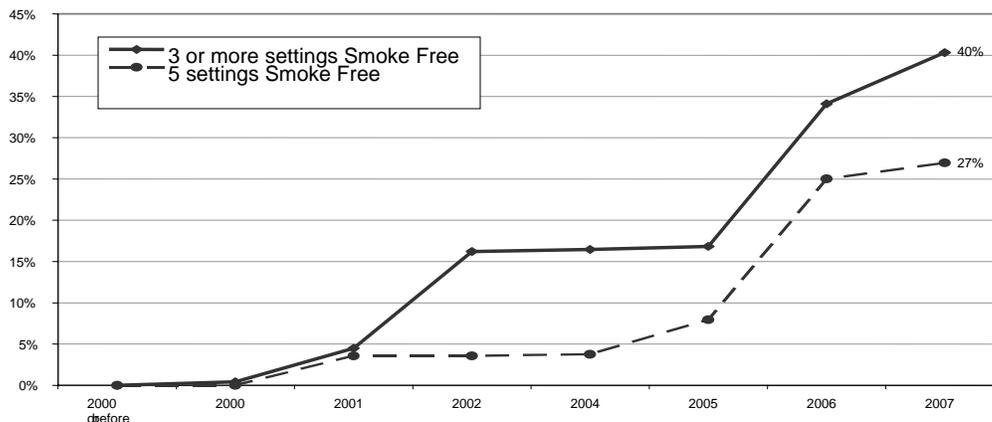
The above paid media campaigns are supplemented through efforts of Tobacco Prevention and Control Coalitions, community groups, and volunteer agencies who work to raise public awareness through press releases, letters-to-the-editor, and public service announcements.

## Elimination of Exposure to Secondhand Smoke

Studies continue to demonstrate that exposure to secondhand smoke is linked to cancer and other serious health consequences. Placing restrictions on smoking in public places is an effective strategy to limit the public's exposure to secondhand smoke. DSHS maintains a website designed to track the state's progress toward a smoke-free Texas. The website contains information about all known Texas municipal ordinances designed to restrict exposure to secondhand smoke. Local communities can create reports from the website database including a review of the local ordinances. The site also lists cities with the best clean indoor air protection in Texas and gives short summaries for ordinances in cities all over Texas.

By the end of FY 2007, 40% of Texas' municipal population was covered by moderate to strong smoke-free policies. In 2008, a total of 23 ordinances were added to the list. The University of Houston, Health Network for Evaluation and Training Systems, maintains the website through a contract with DSHS, <http://txshsord.coe.uh.edu/>. The chart below shows progress made since 2000 when there were no smoke-free ordinances in any municipality.

**Percentage of the Texas Municipal Population Protected by Smoke-Free Ordinances by Number of Settings**



## DSHS Tobacco Prevention Program Infrastructure

The DSHS Tobacco Prevention and Control Program has four staff members in Austin who provide oversight for the program interventions. The program coordinates across other DSHS divisions providing a strategy that involves multiple state agencies, local and regional

governments, voluntary organizations, universities, and local community coalitions. DSHS also has tobacco staff located in the eight regional health service offices across the state. DSHS regional tobacco coordinators conduct the following activities in their health services regions:

- community mobilization and training activities;
- policy change activities;
- counter-marketing/educational activities;
- activities targeted to diverse/special populations, such as minorities, persons in rural areas, youth in alternative settings; and
- cessation activities.

Training for Tobacco Prevention and Control Coalitions is provided statewide through DSHS' Coordinated Training Services prevention contract with Texans Standing Tall. DSHS also sponsors local, regional, and statewide trainings, conferences, and technical assistance on best practices for effective tobacco use prevention and cessation programs. As part of this activity, DSHS supports the Education Service Center - Coordinated School Health project. This initiative strengthens collaborative approaches to tobacco prevention by providing training and technical assistance to 20 regional Education Service Center School Health Specialists.

In October 2008, the University of Houston provided a workshop to introduce school health specialists to the web-based assessment tool, *Positioning for Success*, designed to help school districts with customized school-level planning to improve alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention programs. To reach a larger number of secondary school students with effective tobacco prevention and control programs, school health specialists have disseminated online program information to local school districts and schools. School health specialists provided training, technical assistance, and information to 139,598 local school district professionals across Texas in 2008.

DSHS has contracted with the University of Texas at Austin to develop an evaluation system for the Tobacco Prevention and Control Coalition grant program. This evaluation will document short-term and intermediate program outcomes for future use by both local coalitions and DSHS. The evaluation will document project effectiveness at community and state levels. Because the coalitions were established in February 2008, no information is available about their efforts beyond the counts of activities that have occurred.

DSHS will continue to provide statewide and targeted community surveillance through participation in national surveillance systems (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System and National Youth and Adult Tobacco Surveys), and state surveys (Youth Tobacco Survey and Adult Tobacco Survey).

## **Best Practices Approach to Tobacco Prevention**

DSHS has provided an online resource for local community coalitions, grantees, and other interested stakeholders by identifying best practices and evidence-based interventions in tobacco prevention, cessation, and enforcement strategies.

## Community Tobacco Prevention and Control Toolkit

This evidence-based guide for communities is on the DSHS website, <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/tobacco/bestpractices/>. Using the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Strategic Prevention Framework, a public health model for building healthy communities, this six module toolkit provides information on the comprehensive tobacco prevention and control program components. The five basic components are:

- state and community interventions;
- health communications;
- cessation services;
- surveillance and evaluation; and
- administration and management.

These CDC-developed components are used to coordinate community efforts to establish smoke-free policies and social norms, to promote and assist tobacco users to quit, and to prevent initiation of tobacco use. This approach combines educational, clinical, regulatory, economic, and social strategies.

The DSHS tobacco prevention webpage (<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/tobacco/default.shtm>) cited above also includes links to many other evidence-based tobacco program resources.

### Texas Prevention Initiative Supports Best Practice Approach

In 2000, DSHS (then the Texas Department of Health) implemented the Texas Tobacco Prevention Initiative in Southeast Texas. Youth Tobacco Survey data from the comprehensive program implemented in Beaumont/Port Arthur showed that “current use of any tobacco” reported by middle school students declined to 14.3% in 2006 from 21.3% in 2003, while “current use of any tobacco” by middle school students in Houston and the surrounding area, without the comprehensive programming, rose from 14.8% in 2003 to 17.0% in 2006.

Kaiser Permanente Northwest conducted a Return on Investment (ROI) study for DSHS on outcomes of the Southeast Texas pilot prevention and cessation activities. The June 2006 final report, *The Financial Returns from Community Investments in Tobacco Control*, reported that smoking in Texas is responsible for 24,100 deaths annually and \$10.6 billion in excess medical care expenditures and lost productivity. Annual medical care costs of smoking are more than \$4.5 billion. The Kaiser study assessed net financial returns to employers, health plans, and the state from the pilot initiative. The study concluded that with a \$3 per capita investment in comprehensive programming resulted in a cumulative return on investment per capita of \$58 for the state, \$44 per capita for health plans, and \$16 per capita for employers.

The Kaiser-Permanente study concluded that after five years, the Texas Tobacco Initiative saved over \$252 million in total medical care and productivity costs, more than \$186 million in total medical care savings and more than \$66 million in future productivity costs.

## **Recommendations**

A 2007 Institute of Medicine report, *Ending the Tobacco Problem: A Blueprint for the Nation*, is a call to action to “reduce smoking so substantially that it is no longer a public health problem for our nation.” The Center for Disease Control’s 2007 best practices guide lays out a plan to end the tobacco epidemic: “evidence-based, statewide tobacco programs that are comprehensive, sustained, and accountable have been shown to reduce smoking rates, tobacco-related deaths, and diseases caused by smoking.” Fully implementing the proven strategies detailed in these reports could prevent the overwhelming toll that tobacco takes on Texas’ families and communities.

DSHS recommends that the state maintain a comprehensive approach that includes statewide and community-based prevention and cessation services, health communication intervention messages that support the overall tobacco program efforts, maintenance of a strong collaborative infrastructure, and surveillance/evaluation to monitor the achievements of the tobacco program.

Additionally, DSHS is seeking to expand the geographical reach of the Rider 66 community grant program, providing additional coverage by the American Cancer Society Quitline, and increasing retailer education support strategies for local law enforcement efforts to reduce minors’ access to tobacco products.