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THE TOBACCO FREE TIMES



Making Our Communities Tobacco Free One Policy At a Time

By Jennifer Hill



The George Landis Arboretum, which has 40 acres of public gardens overlooking the Schoharie Valley, implemented a tobacco-free outdoors policy with free assistance from TFC-DOS.

When people first hear our organization's name, "Tobacco Free Communities," they often, and understandably, think it has to do with helping people stop smoking, one at a time, using cessation products such as the nicotine patch or gum. Assisting someone in stopping their addiction to nicotine is lifesaving work, and the NYS Smokers' Quitline is available to help individuals quit: call 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487).

Tobacco Free Communities: Delaware, Otsego & Schoharie (TFC-DOS) approaches

control policies.



Last August, the Village of Cooperstown extended its no-tobacco use ordinance for its parks to include no vaping and ordered FREE signs from TFC-DOS, with the Village's logo on the bottom.

Most people's eyes start to glaze over when they see or hear the word "policy," but tobacco control policies have been highly effective in reducing tobacco use. When we enact tobacco-free policies that make outdoor areas of our communities tobacco-free -- parks, libraries, workplaces, municipal grounds – and that reduce the amount of tobacco marketing, the data show significant numbers of tobacco users quit. Making those areas tobacco-free also protect people, especially children, from secondhand smoke exposure, which kills over 40,000 Americans every year.

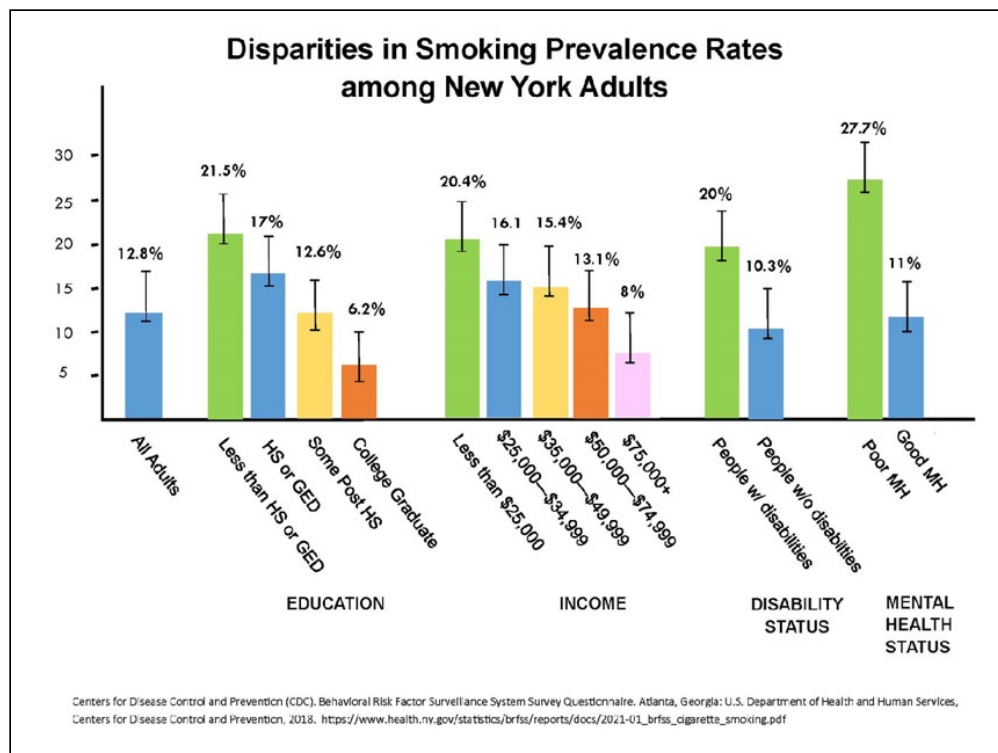


The Dollar General store in Delaware County, right, is only 1/2 mile away from the cluster of houses on the

higher income areas.

High smoking rates often correspond to high rates of poverty or low social economic status (SES); Delaware, Otsego and Schoharie counties all have significant rates of poverty.

People who have lower education attainment, poor mental health, and disabilities – factors that often accompany those living in poverty – smoke at higher rates, as the bar graph below shows.



Worse, low-SES individuals are more likely to contract lethal tobacco-related diseases than higher SES smokers because they are less likely to quit. That is because people with low-SES live in environments that make it harder for them to quit. They are less likely to work in a tobacco-free workplace, less likely to be encouraged to quit by their health care provider – if they have one -- and more likely to live in a neighborhood overrun by tobacco marketing.

Those with low-SES and/or mental illness are also less likely to have health insurance and to afford healthcare. This means they are less likely to have their tobacco-related illnesses diagnosed early, making their illnesses more expensive and harder to treat. Half of all deaths among people with behavioral health disorders may be attributable to smoking-related illnesses.

People of low-SES and/or with mental illness start earliest of all. The earlier a person starts, the harder it is to quit, and it is why the tobacco industry places its products and advertisements in stores and areas where youth will see them. The tobacco industry knows the more youth are exposed to their marketing, the more likely they will start using tobacco – and the more likely they will become lifelong users.

is vital for our region since the data tell us that almost all smokers start smoking before the age of 18; the average age of a new smoker in NYS is 13.

While TFC-DOS has made strides since it began in 2014, we have much more to do. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, TFC-DOS will continue to work with a broad spectrum of community partners to enact policies that will push our area's high tobacco use rates down. We welcome anyone and everyone to join us in making our communities healthier by creating a tobacco-free norm.

Tobacco Marketing is No Joke

By Christopher Bradley



April 1st is traditionally a day when friends and families play harmless jokes and pranks on one another. The tobacco industry, however, has taken this to the extreme, knowing they must fool youth and young adults into using their products that addict, sicken, and kill them. This April Fool's Day, from 7:00 to 8:00pm, EST, the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids will flip the script by roasting Big Tobacco and all their foolery online to shed light on the many ways the industry deceives youth.

A one-hour virtual variety show, the Roast of Big Tobacco will be the concluding event of Take Down Tobacco Day, an annual day of action hosted by the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids and held nationwide. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is a leading nonprofit advocacy organization working to reduce tobacco use and its deadly consequences in the United States and around the world.

This year, Take Down Tobacco Day happened to fall on April Fool's, which gave youth involved in the Campaign the perfect opportunity to use comedy to expose the tobacco industry's deceptive marketing practices. You can expect a collective call to action to eliminate flavors in tobacco products, designed to attract middle school and high school students and get them to start using them.

The Roast will also feature guest speakers, including comedians, policymakers, partners, youth advocates, educators and athletes and will give away swag. You can register for the

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TFC-DOS' youth empowerment program, [Reality Check](#), will be encouraging local youth, organizations and schools to participate in the online event. You can reach our Youth Engagement Coordinator at Christopher.Bradley@sphp.com for more details on how to take down tobacco in our communities.

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