

Reducing the toll of tobacco in Nevada

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“The ability to attract new smokers and develop them into a young adult franchise is key to brand development.” 1999 Philip Morris report, "Five-Year Trends 1988-1992."

Each year the tobacco industry spends an estimated \$74 million peddling its poison in Nevada. That figure is nearly 75 times the amount spent on tobacco control and prevention efforts by local health agencies and advocates in Nevada.

Published research studies have found that kids are twice as sensitive to tobacco advertising than adults and are more likely to be influenced to smoke by cigarette marketing than by peer pressure. One-third of underage experimentation with smoking is attributable to tobacco company advertising despite industry protestations to the contrary.

New data from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids documents tobacco's toll on the next generation of Nevadans. Currently, 10.3 percent of Nevada high school students smoke, nearly 2,000 Nevada kids under the age of 18 will become daily smokers this year, and an estimated 41,000 kids currently alive and well in Nevada will die prematurely from smoking.

A small, but mighty effort to counter industry propaganda has been undertaken by the Nevada Tobacco Prevention Coalition with the launch of its new and improved website.

The mission of NTPC is to improve the health of all Nevadans by reducing the burden of tobacco use and nicotine addiction. Earlier this year, the coalition identified its top two policy and advocacy priorities as it looks ahead to 2015 and the next state legislative session.

First, NTPC will continue to advocate for full funding for tobacco prevention and cessation from Nevada's share of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement money – ideally, at funding levels recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The coalition's second priority is to improve and expand upon the 2006 voter-approved Nevada Clean Indoor Air Act. Advocacy efforts include support for initiatives to expand smoke-free workplaces and multi-unit housing – particularly, taverns, casinos, apartments, and condominiums – currently exempt from smoking restrictions under the NCIAA.

Over the coming year, NTPC will also be working with the University of Nevada, Reno and other institutions of higher education in Nevada to completely restrict smoking and the use of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, on their campuses.

In concert with these policy priorities, the coalition aims to develop and disseminate the most current and evidence-based information on emerging tobacco products, such as e-cigarettes and hookah, research on the toll of tobacco and secondhand smoke exposure in Nevada, and resources for quitting smoking and tobacco cessation – information that can now be found on the Nevada Tobacco Prevention Coalition website www.tobaccofreenv.org.

Acting together, we can end the scourge of tobacco in our state and improve the health of all Nevadans.

The Nevada Tobacco Quitline provides free and confidential telephone-based counseling, in either English or Spanish, for Nevada residents who want to address their tobacco use. This treatment service is delivered by counselors who are trained to treat nicotine addiction for all forms of tobacco use. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669).

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