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Smokeless Tobacco Remains A Threat, Tobacco-Free Venues Can Help



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FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. –Youth use of conventional cigarettes has plummeted – it decreased over 50 percent from 2012 to 2016.¹ Kids (and adults, for that matter) can't smoke wherever they want. The Florida Clean Indoor Air Act prevents people from smoking in most public and private businesses, including restaurants. This law, along with other voluntary policies, has helped denormalize the act of smoking.

But the number of Florida high school students who reported current use of smokeless tobacco – like chew and dip – decreased only 24.5 percent in those same four years, from 2012 to 2016.² There is no law against smokeless tobacco use indoors. Despite having at least 28 cancer-causing chemicals,³ smokeless products haven't faced the same denormalization as conventional cigarettes have. This is an area of concern to address.

Making parks, recreational areas and sports programs tobacco-free can help send the message that tobacco use of any kind is not acceptable, among kids or adults. It helps people understand that smokeless tobacco is not harmless, despite being allowed in places where cigarettes are not. After all, smokeless tobacco users have an 80 percent higher risk of oral cancer compared to non-users.⁴

Okaloosa County residents may not realize that there are local parks and venues in our community that have gone smoke-free. For example, some of the parks in Niceville are smoke-free like Turkey Creek Park and the Softball Complex. This park rule prohibits the use of any smoking products within park grounds. However, shifting toward more tobacco-free venues can further help to eliminate the problem of smokeless tobacco in our community. Tobacco-free parks, venues and sports programs benefits the community by preventing people from inhaling secondhand smoke and prevents people from using smokeless tobacco at these locations.

Your local Tobacco Free Florida representatives are here to help your venue or program through its transition to becoming tobacco-free. For more information, contact Kaili Calasso at tobaccofreeokaloosa@flhealth.gov.

About the Florida Department of Health

The Department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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About Tobacco Free Florida

The Department's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Since the program began in 2007, more than 212,000 Floridians have successfully quit using one of Tobacco Free Florida's free tools and services. There are now approximately 451,000 fewer adult smokers in Florida than there was 10 years ago, and the state has saved \$17.7 billion in health care costs. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way services, visit [www.tobaccofreeflorida.com](#) or follow the campaign on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida](#) or on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla](#).

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¹ Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2016.

² Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2016.

³ World Health Organization. Smokeless Tobacco and Some Tobacco-Specific N-Nitrosamines International Agency for Research on Cancer Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans Vol. 89. Lyon, (France): World Health Organization, International Agency for Research on Cancer, 2007 [accessed 2015 Feb 10].

⁴ Boffetta, P, et al., "Smokeless tobacco and cancer," The Lancet 9:667-675, 2008.