



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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CDC Report: Increase in pipe tobacco and cigar consumption is on the rise, despite decreased cigarette use

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Consumption of Cigarettes and Combustible Tobacco - United States, 2000-2011," shows that despite a continuing decline in cigarette use, there has recently been a drastic increase in adult consumption of pipe tobacco (used for roll-your-own cigarettes) and cigarette-like cigars.

The report also revealed that while total consumption of all smoked tobacco products declined by 27.5 percent between 2000 and 2011, pipe tobacco and large cigar consumption increased by 482 percent and 233 percent, respectively.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "This trend is very concerning because it has the potential to dismantle the gains made over the past years in lowering the rate of smoking, our nation's most preventable cause of death and disease."

The increase in these combustible forms of tobacco is directly related to their lower cost. Cigar use increased primarily due to tobacco manufacturers adding weight to many small cigars so they can be classified as large cigars. A large cigar is taxed differently from a cigarette which gives a cigar a lower overall sales price.

"In Alabama, we are seeing more interest in little cigars, which look almost exactly like cigarettes, but are wrapped in paper which contains tobacco," said Alabama Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch Director Diane Beeson. "Little cigars come in a variety of candy flavors, while candy flavored cigarettes are banned by the 2009 Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act."

"The rise in cigar smoking, which other studies show is a growing problem among youth and young adults, is cause for alarm," said Tim McAfee, director of CDC's Office on Smoking and Health. "The Surgeon General's Report released this past March shows that getting young people to either quit smoking or never start smoking is the key to ending the tobacco epidemic, because 99 percent of all smokers start before they're 26 years old."

Smoking causes cancer in the lungs, bladder, cervix, esophagus, kidneys, larynx, mouth, pancreas, stomach and throat. From 2000-2009, more people in Alabama died of cancer of the lung and bronchus (30,592) than any other cancer site.

According to The Burden of Tobacco in Alabama, a report published in 2011 by the University of Alabama Institute of Social Science Research, 7,896 adults died of smoking-related causes in 2009. The national Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids reports that 174,000 Alabamians under the age of 18 will ultimately die prematurely from smoking with 10,000 becoming new smokers each year.

Increasing prices of tobacco products has been one of the most effective ways to reduce tobacco use and prevent youth smoking initiation, according to the CDC.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration also released a report recently which shows that Alabama has continued to meet its goals of curtailing sales of tobacco to underage youth (those under 18). To further reduce tobacco use among youth and young adults, the 2012 Surgeon General's Report recommends making tobacco products less affordable, running hard-hitting mass media campaigns and adequately funding evidence-based tobacco control and prevention programs.

The Alabama Comprehensive Cancer Control Program currently partners with the Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch to prevent youth smoking initiation statewide by offering free services to Alabama residents. If you or a loved one need assistance with quitting tobacco, go to AlabamaQuitNow.com or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669).

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