# Introduction and Data Highlights

The effects of tobacco are well known and wide-ranging. Tobacco is an addictive drug which hurts the people using it as well their families, friends, and acquaintances. Its cost is felt financially, emotionally, and physically. Laws have been enacted to prevent youth from using tobacco, but many still start smoking or chewing in middle or high school.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), using analysis of state comprehensive tobacco control programs, has developed a set of best practices with four main goals. Those goals are to:

- Prevent the initiation of tobacco use among young people;
- Eliminate nonsmokers' exposure to secondhand smoke;
- Promote quitting among adults and young people; and
- Identify and eliminate tobacco-related disparities.

To prevent youth initiation and encourage cessation, CDC's Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs[1] includes the following recommendations from Task Force on Community Preventive Services[2]:

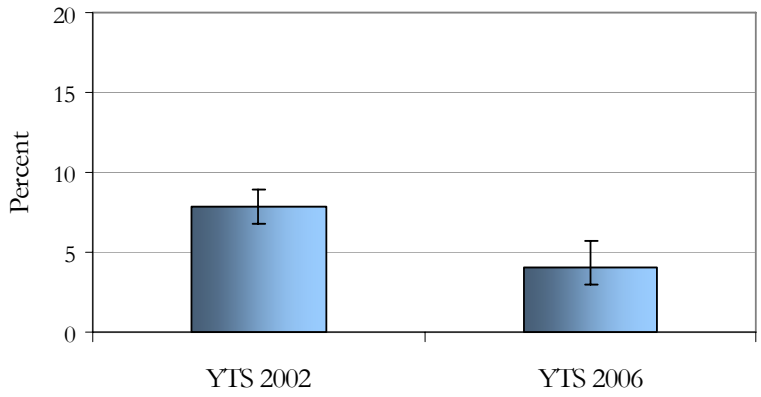
- Increasing the unit price of tobacco products;
- Conducting mass media education campaigns when combined with other community interventions;
- Mobilizing the community to restrict minors' access to tobacco products when combined with additional interventions (stronger local laws directed at retailers, active enforcement of retailer sales laws, retailer education with enforcement);
- Implementing school-based interventions in combination with mass media campaigns and additional community efforts.

One of the key components to these best practices is surveillance and evaluation, which gives policymakers and others responsible for fiscal oversight a way of monitoring outcomes. The Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) is a tool, developed by CDC, to measure students' tobacco-related knowledge, behaviors, and attitudes.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health, Division of Tobacco Prevention and Control conducted the PA YTS 2006 during the fall and winter of the 2006-2007 school year. The results of this survey are intended to be used by tobacco control program staff, researchers, healthcare providers, local health departments, and community partners.

# Decline in Smoking Prevalence

## Current Cigarette Use among Pennsylvania Middle School Students



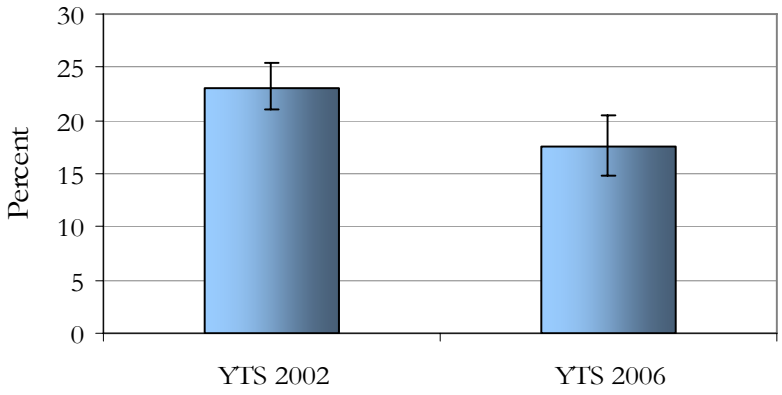

**Nationally, eight percent of middle school students (grades six through eight) are estimated to be current smokers.[1]**

**In Pennsylvania, current cigarette use among middle school students (grades six through eight) has dropped by nearly half, from an estimate of eight percent in 2002 to nearly four percent in 2006.**

## Current Cigarette Use among Pennsylvania High School Students

**Nationally 23 percent of high school students (grades nine through 12) are estimated to be current smokers.[2]**

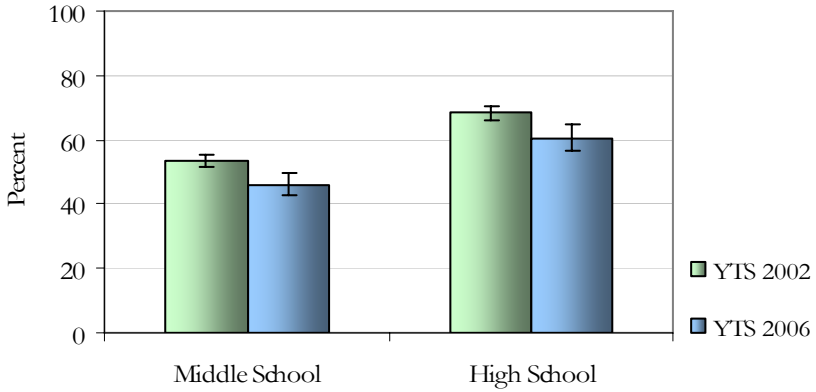
**In Pennsylvania cigarette use has fallen, from an estimate of 23 percent in 2002 to an estimated 18 percent in 2006. This rate approaches the Healthy People 2010 national health objective goal of 16 percent.**



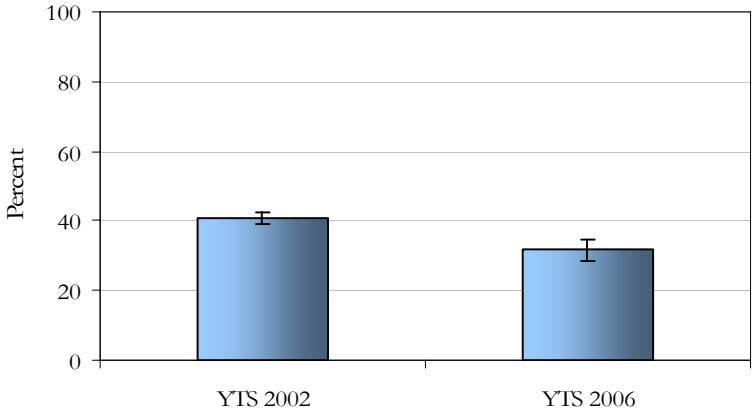
# Decline in Exposure to Tobacco Smoke Pollution

**Pennsylvania Students Who Were in a Room in Past Seven Days with Someone Who Was Smoking**

**In both high school and middle school, between 2002 and 2006, fewer Pennsylvania students were in a room in the past seven days with someone who was smoking.**




**Pennsylvania Middle School Students Who Rode in a Car in the Past Seven Days with Someone Who was Smoking**

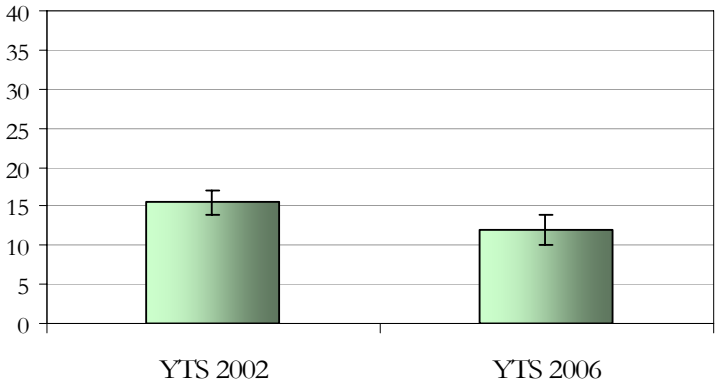



**In Pennsylvania fewer middle students rode in a car in the past seven days with someone smoking. The rate fell from an estimated 41 percent in 2002 to an estimate of 32 percent in 2006.**

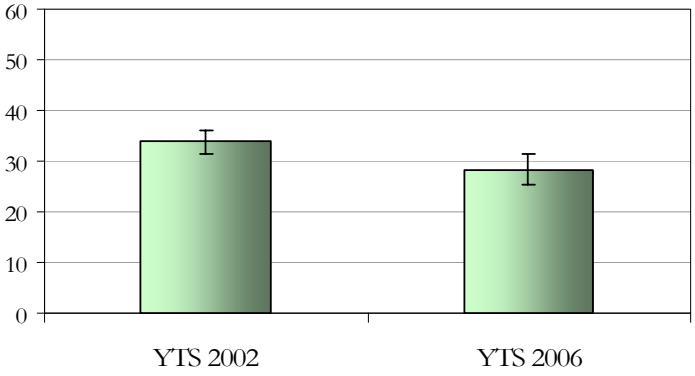
# Changing Social Norms among Pennsylvania Students

**Pennsylvania High School Students Who Thought It Safe to Smoke for a Year or Two If They Then Quit**

**In 2002, approximately 16 percent of high school students thought that it was safe to smoke for a year or two if they then quit. That number has been reduced to an estimated 12 percent in 2006.**



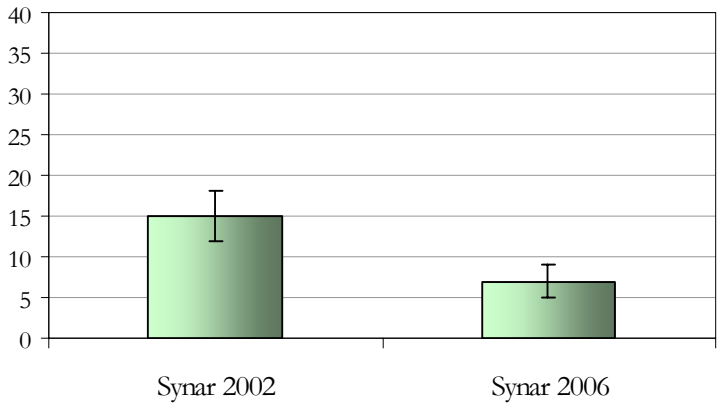

**Pennsylvania High School Students Who Would Wear or Use Something with a Tobacco Company Name or Picture on It**




**Students are less willing to wear or use products with tobacco company labeling on them. In 2002 an estimated 34 percent of high school students would wear such a product, and in 2006, the estimate had fallen to 28 percent.**

# Decline in Illegal Sales of Tobacco to Youth

**Illegal Sales of Tobacco to Pennsylvania Youth Under Age 18 Between 2002 and 2006**




**The Synar Survey is an annual federally mandated sample survey to estimate the illegal rate of sales to tobacco to minors. States have been required to maintain an illegal sales rate of 20 percent or less since 2002.**


1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs-2007*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Pormotion, Office on Smoking and Health; October 2007.
2. ZaZa S, Briss PA, Harris KW, editors. *The Guide to Community Preventive Services: What Works to Pormote Health.* New York: OxfordUniversity Press; 2005.