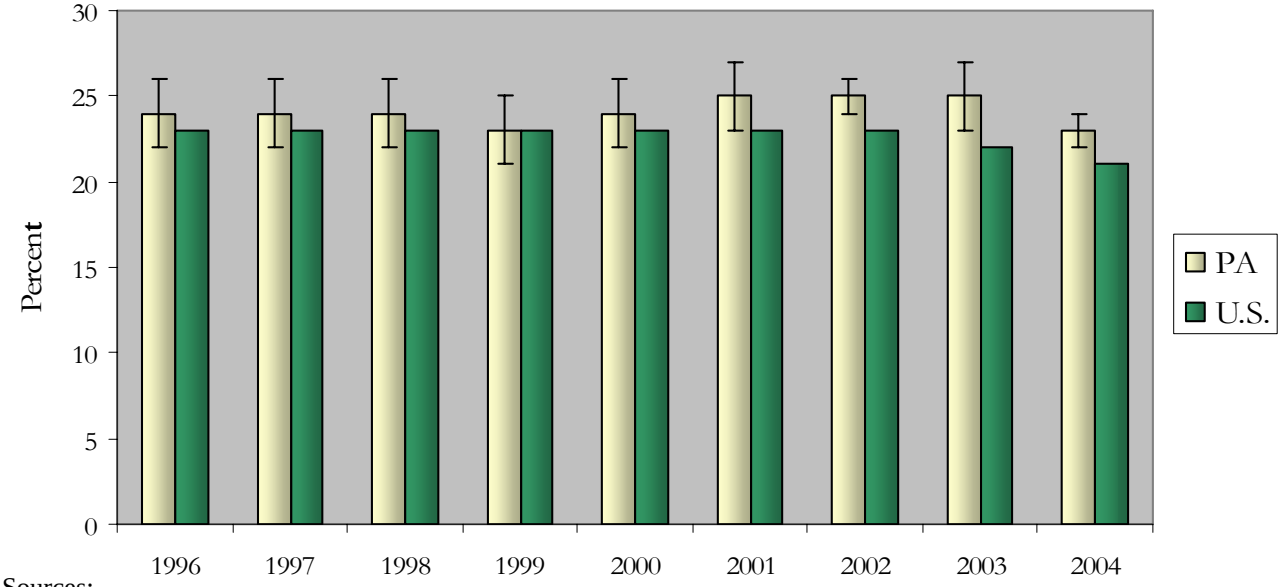
2. Prevalence of Tobacco Use

While tobacco sales have shown a steady decline, the prevalence of smoking in the United States and Pennsylvania has remained relatively unchanged. Chart 2-1 illustrates the trend in Pennsylvania to have a slightly larger percentage of smokers than the nation's median rate. It also shows that in 2004 there was a statistically significant drop in the smoking rate in Pennsylvania compared with the previous year.

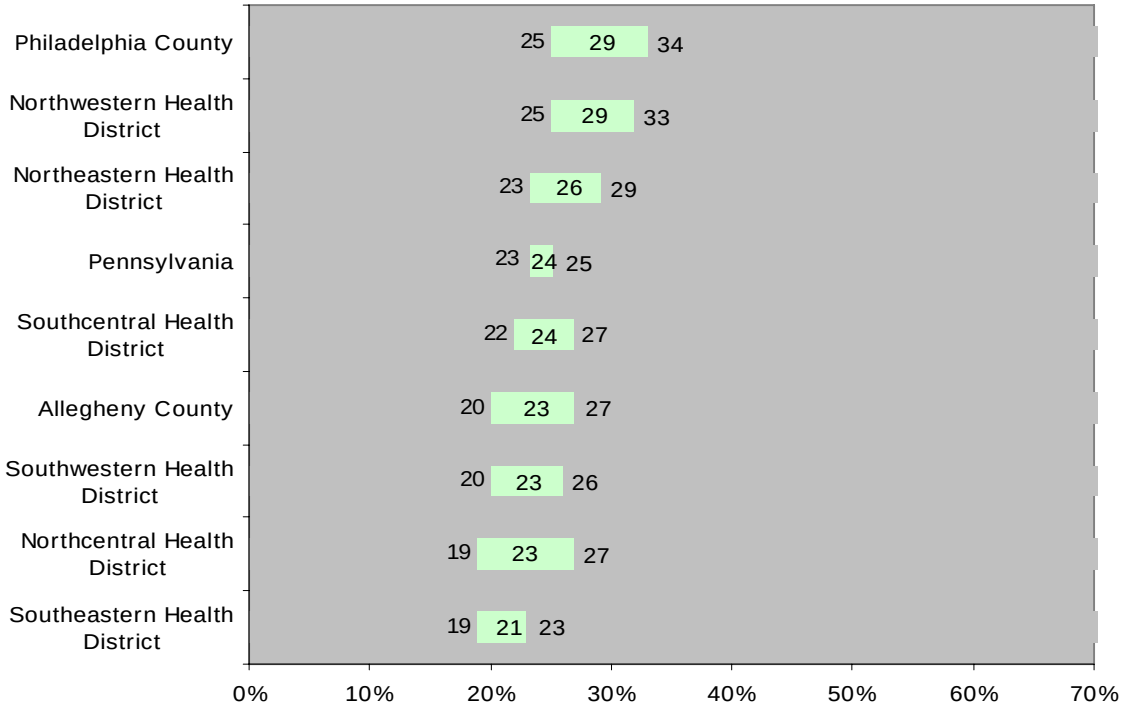
There are modest geographic differences in smoking prevalence, as seen in Chart 2-2. The Southeastern Health District, with Philadelphia excluded, had a slightly lower prevalence while the county of Philadelphia and the Northwestern Health District had slightly higher rates.

Chart 2-1. **Percentage of Adults Who Smoke by Year, Pennsylvania vs. United States, 1996 - 2004**



Sources:
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 1996-2004, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Health Statistics and Research and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 1996-2004, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
I denotes 95% confidence interval.

Chart 2-2. **Percentage of Current Smoking* by Geographic Area, Pennsylvania, 2003-2004**



Source: Pennsylvania Behavioral Risk Surveillance Survey, 2003 and 2004, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Health Statistics and Research.
* Percentage of adults who smoked some days or every day of the 30 days prior to the survey, and had smoked 100 or more cigarettes in lifetime.
Note: The lower and upper numbers are the range of the 95% confidence interval, and the middle number is the estimated value of the prevalence of smoking in that area.

Northwestern Health District includes Warren, Clearfield, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, Forest, McKean, Elk, Erie, Cameron, Clarion, Jefferson, and Crawford counties.

Northeastern Health District includes Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, and Wyoming counties.

Southwestern Health District includes Washington, Westmoreland, Cambria, Indiana, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette, Green, Beaver, and Somerset counties.

Southcentral Health District includes York, Franklin, Fulton, Bedford, Adams, Perry, Lebanon, Huntington, Juniata, Cumberland, Dauphin, Blair, and Mifflin counties.

Southeastern Health District includes Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Montgomery, and Schuylkill counties.

Northcentral Health District includes Synder, Northumberland, Union, Columbia, Montour, Sullivan, Bradford, Tioga, Lycoming, Centre, Clinton, and Potter counties.

Adults around the state are trying to quit smoking. Nearly half of adult smokers in Pennsylvania, who were asked in 2005, had quit smoking for one day or more in the past year because they were trying to quit smoking. More than half said that they were seriously considering quitting in the next six months, and over a quarter of adult smokers were planning to quit in the next 30 days (Table 2-3).

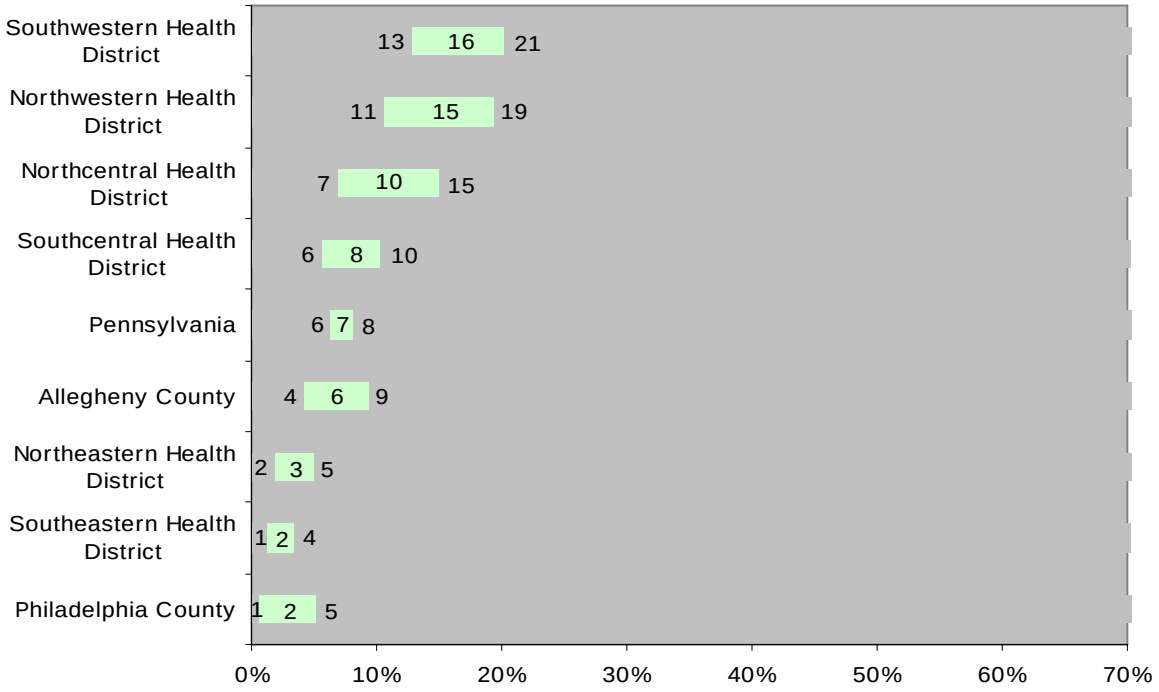
***Table 2-3*. Selected Characteristics for Smokers Trying to Quit, Pennsylvania Adults, 2005**

	Percent	**Confidence Interval**
Current smokers who are seriously considered stopping smoking in the next six months	55%	50%-60%
Current smokers who planned to stop smoking in the next thirty days	27%	22% - 31%
Current smokers who stopped smoking for 1 or more days in the past year because they were trying to quit	46%	41% - 51%
Current or former smokers who used assistance, either counseling or medication, the last time they tried to quit smoking	25%	20% - 31%

Source: Adult Tobacco Survey, 2005, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Chronic Diseases and Injury Prevention, Division of Tobacco Prevention and Control.

The second most commonly used tobacco product in Pennsylvania is smokeless tobacco. Approximately seven percent of Pennsylvania adults had used smokeless tobacco in the past 30 days, according to combined 2002 and 2003 BRFSS data. Smokeless tobacco consumption is much higher among males than females. The use of snuff, chew, or spit tobacco is also more common in the rural parts of the state than in the urban areas. The geographical breakdown of smokeless tobacco use among males on the next page (Chart 2-4) shows the Southwestern and Northwestern areas had higher percentages than the rest of the state. The Northeastern and Southeastern Health Districts and Philadelphia County had lower percentages than the state.

Chart 2-4. **Percentage of Current Smokeless Tobacco Use by Geographic Area**
Pennsylvania Males, 2002-2003



Source: Pennsylvania Behavioral Risk Surveillance Survey, 2002 and 2003, Pennsylvania Department of Health, Bureau of Health Statistics and Research.
* Percentage of adults who used smokeless tobacco some days or every day of the 30 days prior to the survey.
Note: The lower and upper numbers are the range of the 95% confidence interval, and the middle number is the estimated value of the prevalence of smoking in that district.