

WEST VIRGINIA  
Department of



For more information contact:  
Scott Eubank, Media Director  
Department of Health and Human Resources  
Bureau for Public Health, OCHSHP  
Phone: 304-356-4230  
Email: [Scott.S.Eubank@wv.gov](mailto:Scott.S.Eubank@wv.gov)

December 7, 2012

For Immediate Release

WV Division of Tobacco Prevention Releases Updated Summary of  
"Tobacco Is Killing (and Costing) Us" Report

The West Virginia Division of Tobacco Prevention (DTP) and the Center for Health Statistics announced the release of an updated summary for the report "Tobacco is Killing (and Costing) Us" – a statistical brief on tobacco use rates, smoking-related deaths, and smoking-related healthcare costs. This summary outlines some of the increasing and devastating aspects of cigarette smoking in West Virginia.

West Virginia continues to have one of the highest rates of smoking in the United States. In 2011, approximately 26.8 percent or 383,000 WV adults were cigarette smokers. This statistic is from the 2010 WV Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey.

Smoking remains a leading cause of preventable death and disease in West Virginia. An average of 3,770 West Virginians (age 35 and older) die each year of diseases related to cigarette smoking. Every smoker in this age group who died lost an average of 14.6 years off their life due to premature death.

Smoking-related economic costs to the State can be separated into 2 categories: direct health care costs and productivity losses due to smoking related illnesses and death. For the years 2005 – 2009 (again for adults age 35+), annual smoking-related direct health care costs totaled \$709 million, and productivity losses averaged just over \$1 billion per year.

Combined, smoking-related health care costs and worker productivity losses total nearly \$1.8 billion a year. Another way to look at these costs is that the average added health costs and productivity losses for each WV smoker totals \$4,600 annually. This sum equates to \$9.00 for every pack of cigarettes sold annually in the State.

In contrast, statistics suggest the state's Raze campaign and other youth tobacco prevention programs are empowering WV youth to reject tobacco use. The percentage of WV high school youth who reported they had never smoked cigarettes has increased significantly to 50.5 percent (from 25.7% in 2000). Additionally, the prevalence of current cigarette smoking among WV high school students has significantly declined to 22.4 percent (from 38.5% in 2000).

For more information about tobacco use in West Virginia, the Division of Tobacco Prevention, or to see a copy of the Report's updated summary go to [www.wvdtb.org](http://www.wvdtb.org), or call toll-free 1-866-384-5250.