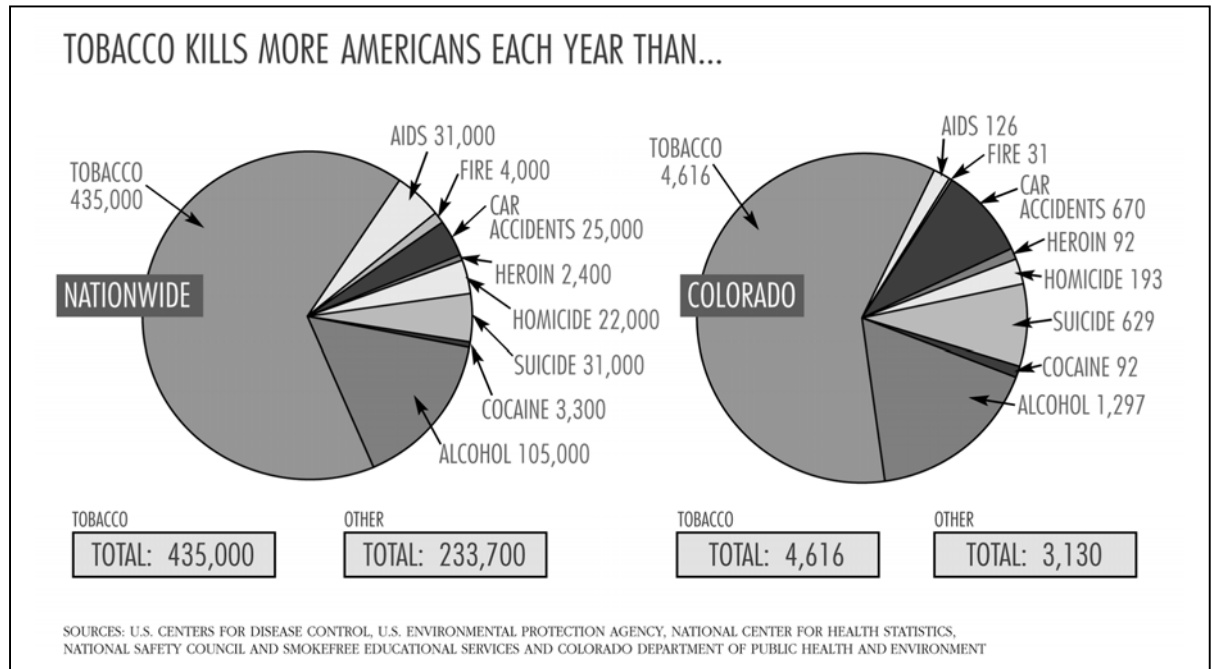


# Tobacco Use in Colorado

September 2001

## Tobacco is a Killer

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in Colorado. More than 4,200 Coloradans die each year from tobacco related illnesses. Lifelong smokers have a one-in-two chance of dying from a smoking-related illness, and each smoker who dies loses an average of 12 to 15 years of potential life.



## The Human Toll of Tobacco Use

- ◆ Overall, 20 percent of Colorado's adult residents (over 900,000 people) currently smoke, with the highest rates among young adults aged 18 to 24 years (28.2%).
- ◆ In 2000, 52.8 percent of adult smokers in Colorado made quit attempts of at least one day.
- ◆ In Colorado, Hispanic adults, unmarried adults, and adults with annual household income levels less than \$25,000 are much more likely to smoke than other Colorado adults.
- ◆ Approximately 13 percent of Colorado women smoke during pregnancy.
- ◆ More Colorado adults have used smokeless tobacco (21%) than their national counterparts (16%).
- ◆ Approximately 180,000 of Colorado's smokers are at risk for a smoking-related illness.

## The Financial Toll of Tobacco Use

- ◆ Annual healthcare costs in Colorado directly related to smoking are more than \$930 million.
- ◆ Yearly Colorado government Medicaid payments for tobacco-related illnesses total \$150 million.
- ◆ Annual non-health costs related to tobacco in Colorado, such as cigarette-caused fires, lost productivity and early termination of employment are at least \$650 million.
- ◆ Estimated costs of lost income and productivity due to smoking-related premature death are approximately \$425 million annually.
- ◆ Annual expenditures in Colorado for babies' health problems caused by mothers' smoking during pregnancy are between \$17 and 49 million.

## Quit Attempts by Colorado Adults

As awareness of the dangers of smoking have increased, more and more Coloradans have considered and taken up the challenge of quitting.

- ◆ On any given year in the past decade, nearly 50% of current smokers report attempting to quit smoking.
- ◆ Tobacco consumption in Colorado has dropped from an average of 341 packs per smoker per year (6820 cigarettes) in 1997 to 304 packs per smoker per year (6095 cigarettes) in 1999.
- ◆ Significantly more adult smokers are planning to quit today than in the past.
- ◆ There are fewer pregnant women smoking today than in the past.
- ◆ The average smoker makes at least seven serious attempts at quitting before remaining smoke-free for a year.

***Programs to reduce tobacco use begin paying dividends immediately. These dividends are multiplied the longer programs are in place.***

### Health Benefits

- ◆ After one year without smoking, the risk of heart disease caused by smoking is reduced to about half.
- ◆ After 10 years, the risk of lung cancer for former smokers drops to less than half that of a continuing smoker.
- ◆ In five to 15 years, the risk of stroke for former smokers returns to the level of those who never smoked.
- ◆ For every 14 women who stop smoking during pregnancy, one low-birthweight infant could be prevented.

### Economic Benefits

- ◆ In Colorado, each 1 percent reduction in smoking rates would save an estimated \$700,000 in medical costs related to treating heart disease and stroke in the first year alone. A 1 percent reduction each year over a period of five years could save Colorado an estimated \$9.9 million.
- ◆ For every dollar invested in smoking cessation programs for pregnant women, Colorado would save approximately \$6.00 in neonatal intensive care costs and long-term care costs associated with low-birthweight.

**Evidence has shown that it is both possible and feasible to reduce tobacco use, save lives and save money through implementation of comprehensive tobacco control programs.**

### Sources:

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