

Smoking Rates Briefing Document
Presented to the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities
September 20, 2007

Smoking cessation, or quitting smoking, is listed in RCW 43.20.280 as one of the indicators of health that the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities must address in its plan to eliminate health disparities. However, this briefing document provides data on **smoking rates**, which are more commonly collected and reported and consistent with Healthy People 2010.

CRITERION #1: MAGNITUDE

- In 2006, the smoking rate among Washington adults was 17%; the rate has been declining since 2001.
- From 1998 to 2006, youth smoking has declined; however, since 2004 smoking rates among high school students have stalled. In 2006, the smoking rates among 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th graders were 2%, 6%, 15%, and 20%, respectively.
- Secondhand smoke exposure in the home decreased from 19% in 2000 to 11% in 2005.
- In 2005, Washington had the fifth lowest state smoking rate in the U.S.

CRITERION #2: ASSOCIATION TO HEALTH OUTCOMES

- Smoking is the single most preventable cause of disease and death in Washington and in the U.S.
- Smoking causes heart disease, several kinds of cancer (lung, larynx, esophagus, pharynx, mouth, and bladder), and chronic lung disease. Smoking during pregnancy is associated with miscarriage, premature birth, low birthweight and sudden infant death syndrome.
- An estimated 8,000 Washington residents die from smoking-related causes each year.
- In Washington State, annual healthcare costs associated with tobacco use are an estimated \$1.5 billion.

CRITERION #3: DISPARITY

- For the years, 2003-2005, smoking rates were higher among American Indians and Alaska Natives (37%), Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (27%) and African Americans (25%), relative to Hispanics (17%), whites (19%) and Asians (12%).
- The Index of Disparity was 108.3%.
- The smoking rates for whites have decreased from 1999 to 2005, but have remained relatively stable among all other racial and ethnic groups.
- Data from King County revealed that certain Asian subgroups, such as Korean and Vietnamese men, have particularly high rates of smoking, at 29% and 38%, respectively.
- Washington men smoke at a higher rate than women, 20% versus 17%, respectively.
- Among Asians, Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics, men smoked at significantly higher rates than women.

The Index of Disparity is the average of the difference in rates between the racial/ethnic group with the "best" rate and all other racial/ethnic groups.

Keppel KG et al., Measuring progress in healthy people 2010. Statistical Notes. no 25. NCHS. 2004