



Tobacco Use in Lorain County 2003-2006

August 2008

Research Brief

About the Lorain County Tobacco Prevention Partnership

Through the leadership of Lorain City Health Department, a countywide coalition comprising partners from community-based organizations, social services, educators, health service providers, and city and county government, the Lorain County Tobacco Prevention Partnership was formed in September 2003. The partnership identified the need for comprehensive, cohesive, culturally competent, community-based tobacco control systems committed to improving and promoting community health. With funding from the Ohio Tobacco Prevention Foundation, the coalition embarked on programming with the following goals in mind:

- Preventing youth from initiating tobacco use
- Reducing tobacco use among youth
- Reducing tobacco use among adults
- Reducing tobacco use among pregnant women
- Reducing exposure to secondhand smoke

Incidence and Patterns of Tobacco Use In Lorain County

Year One Research

A. Incidence of Tobacco Use Among Lorain County Youth

The coalition spent the first year (2003/04) establishing baseline data to understand the prevalence, nature, and patterns of tobacco use in Lorain County. Several sources were used including the 2003 *Communities that Care* youth survey, 2002 *Parents Research Institute for Drug Education* (PRIDE), and *Monitoring the Future Study* of the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research to gauge the incidence of tobacco use among Lorain County youth and to make comparisons to the nation. According to these sources, tobacco use was more prominent in Lorain County youth than the nation overall.

- One third of Lorain County youth had used cigarettes at least once in their lifetime (32.5%).
- 11.7% of Lorain County youth used cigarettes at least once in the past 30 days.
- 12.3 was the average age Lorain County youth smoked their first cigarette.
- Tobacco use in Lorain County and the nation increased as students entered higher grade levels in school.
- Both 8th and 10th graders in Lorain County reported higher lifetime cigarette use than the nation with the greatest difference at the 8th grade level.
- Similarly, 8th graders and 10th graders in Lorain County who used cigarettes in the past 30 days was higher than the national average.
- Smokeless tobacco use in Lorain County was slightly lower than the nation.

B. Influences on Cigarette Smoking

In addition to incidence and intensity, the *Communities that Care* survey measured specific influences on cigarette use. Baseline data collected in year one included measures of perceived risk of harm, personal approval/disapproval, and social norms of peers and adults. Overall, survey data revealed that despite the high incidence of tobacco use, perceived risk of harm in Lorain County was higher than the nation.

- 66.9% of Lorain County youth described cigarette smoking as "very harmful" to their health (national average was 52.1%, 2003-04 *PRIDE Survey*)
- 83.1% of youth considered cigarettes smoking as "wrong."
- 81.5% of youth considered cigarette smoking "unacceptable" by adults (national average was 80.5%, 2003-04 *PRIDE Survey*).

C. Patterns of Tobacco Use

To supplement survey data, the Lorain County Tobacco Prevention Partnership commissioned the Public Services Institute of Lorain County Community College to conduct focus group discussions. The overall intent was to explore circumstances leading to use, patterns of tobacco use, and recommended measures for prevention and control from the perspective of those affected most within the community. Consistent with Partnership goals and objectives, 8 focus groups were convened with African American youth, Hispanic youth, White youth, pregnant women, recovering substance abusers, African American adults, Hispanic adults, and White adults. All focus group participants were current or former smokers.

Circumstance leading to tobacco use

- Exposure and access to cigarettes via family members contributed heavily to tobacco use
- Social norms made cigarette smoking acceptable in the county.

Patterns of tobacco use

- Stress relief and relaxation were the number one reasons adults and youth liked to smoke
- Boredom was another reason people liked to smoke cigarettes which also contributed to peak use times.
- Youth were more likely than adults to be social smokers.

Perceptions related to addiction

- Former adult smokers acknowledged physical addiction to nicotine given the difficulty experienced in quitting.
- Current adult smokers believed cigarettes were mentally addicting, more so than physical addiction.
- Most youth felt they were not addicted physically and could quit smoking anytime.

Recognized consequences of cigarette smoking

- People smoked despite known risks and personal loss of loved ones from cigarette use.
- Dangers of secondhand smoke were very well known, and adults generally worried more about the associated health risks to their children than themselves.
- Youth knew of personal health risks but chose not to think about these consequences while they were young.
- Expense of cigarettes was a primary concern for adults.

Suggested measures for prevention

When focus group participants were probed for productive ways to prevent and control tobacco use, the following insights were gleaned:

- Youth received conflicting messages about tobacco use (educational messages versus adult behavior) and sometimes turned this into greater rationale to smoke.
- Perpetual use among family & friends worked against educational & prevention efforts.
- Anti-smoking messages incorporating "how to" strategies were considered more effective from the perspective of youth.
- The harsher, more devastating, and more graphic an advertisement, the more likely the message was to resonate with people.

D. Incidence of Tobacco Use Among Lorain County Adults

Much of what is known about tobacco use among adults comes from the Ohio Family Health Survey sponsored by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). The Ohio Family Health Survey was administered in 2005 to 40,000 households statewide of which 1,600 were Lorain County residents. According to the survey, incidence of tobacco use among adults in Lorain County was comparable to the State (i.e. 26.3% of adults in Lorain County smoked compared with 26.8% adults across the State of Ohio). Following is a summary of tobacco use by demographic characteristics:

Gender

- Overall, there was little gender difference in smoking rates.
- However, men were slightly more likely to smoke than women.

Race/Ethnicity

- In Lorain County and the state of Ohio, Black adults consistently reported the highest levels of cigarette smoking (30.7% and 29.5% respectively) followed by White adults (25.7% and 26.6% respectively).
- People of Hispanic origin reported the lowest rate of smoking both at county and state levels (23.4% and 23.6% respectively).

Age

- Overall, cigarette use among adults decreased with age.
- Young adults were more likely to be current smokers than older adults.
- One-third of adults between the ages of 18-24 in the state and Lorain County were smokers compared to only one-tenth of adults aged 65 and older.

Marital Status

- Overall smoking rates between Lorain County and the state were similar with respect to marital status.
- However, single individuals were more likely to be cigarette smokers than married individuals.
- One in every three unmarried persons smoked cigarettes compared to one in every five married individuals.

Employment

- Overall, unemployed adults were more likely to be smokers than those adults who were working.
- Furthermore, unemployed adults in Ohio reported a higher rate of cigarette use than their Lorain County counterparts.

Education

- Similar to age, education was negatively correlated to tobacco use.
- Overall, the more educated the respondents, the lower the likelihood that they smoked cigarettes.
- This pattern was consistent for county and state.

Tackling The Issue

Based on data findings in year one, the Lorain County Tobacco Prevention Partnership embarked on programming to prevent and reduce tobacco use in year two, three, and four through mini-grants awarded to community based organizations. Mini-grants enabled the project to reach population segments of Lorain County that were both targeted and underserved. During the second year of programming, the coalition decided to focus heavily on youth prevention. During year three, mini-grants focused primarily on adult cessation while year four targeted both youth prevention and adult cessation. Following is the coalition's summary of accomplishments:

Year Two Action

Goal: Preventing Youth from Initiating Tobacco Use

Program	Target Population	# Served	Significant Changes
Big Brother Big Sister	African American, Hispanic/Latino	2,173	* Increased proportion in youth with a firm intention to never use tobacco.
Boys & Girls Club – <i>Smart Moves</i>	African American, Hispanic/Latino		* A significant change in attitude about social acceptance of tobacco use was reported.
Community Health Partners	African American		
Elyria City Schools – <i>STAMP</i>	All youth		
Lorain Schools- <i>STAMP</i>	Hispanic/Latino		
Urban League – <i>Lorain County Stand</i>	All youth		

Goal: Reducing Tobacco Use Among Youth

Program	Target Population	# Served	Significant Changes
American Lung Association - <i>Alternative to Suspension</i>	Youth violating school and/or community tobacco policy	55	No significant changes.

Goal: Reducing Tobacco Use Among Adults

Program	Target Population	# Served	Significant Changes
Elyria City Health District – <i>Fresh Start & 5 As</i>	Pregnant women	18	* 80% reported a quit attempt of 1 day or longer. * 14% reported that they were tobacco-free at the end of the program. * 72% reported a decrease in tobacco products consumed. * 60% indicated they “will definitely stop” and 40% indicated they “will probably stop” smoking cigarettes within the next 6 months.

Year Three Action

Goal: Preventing Youth From Initiating Tobacco Use

Program	Target Population	# Served	Significant Changes
Elyria City Schools – <i>LifeSkills, Project ALERT & STAMP</i>	Grades 4,5 & 6	217	* Significant change In attitude with respect to youth with firm intention to never use tobacco. * Significant change in proportion of youth who believe tobacco use is not cool. * Significant change in proportion of youth who think that tobacco users have more friends.

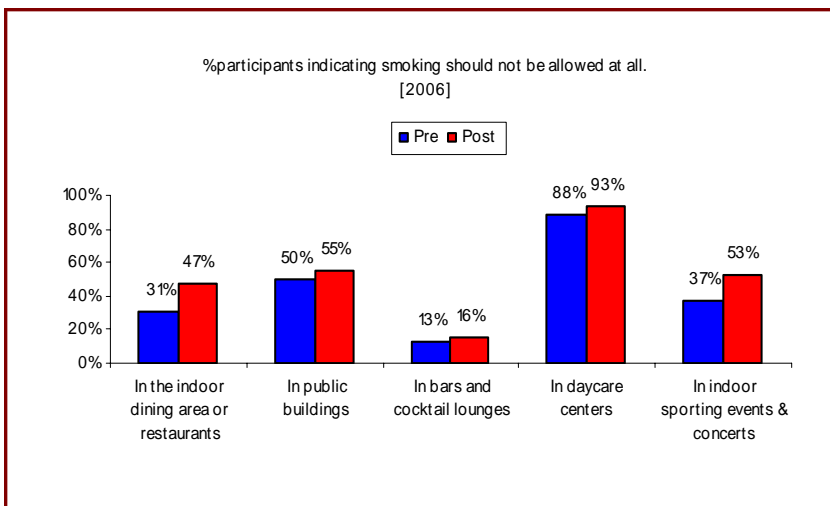
Goal: Reducing Tobacco Use Among Youth

Program	Target Population	# Served	Significant Changes
American Lung Association - <i>Alternative to Suspension</i>	Youth violating school and/or community tobacco policy	88	No significant changes.

Goal: Reducing Tobacco Use Among Adults

Program	Target Population	# Served	Significant Changes
Catholic Charities Services of Lorain County - <i>Quitting for Life</i>	Low income including the homeless	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 60 days after the program, 53% reported a reduction in the amount of tobacco products consumed. * Average number of cigarettes smoked per day decreased. * Increased awareness of benefits of quitting tobacco use. * Improved attitude with firm intention to quit using tobacco within the next 6 months.
Lorain County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services (LCADA - <i>Fresh Start</i>)	Recovering addicts	39	
Elyria City Health District - <i>Fresh Start & 5 As</i>	Pregnant women	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 85% reported that they attempted to quit smoking for 1 day or longer. * 30% reported that they were tobacco-free at the end of the program. * 30% of participants were tobacco free 60 days after the program. * A decrease in average number of cigarettes smoked per day was reported. * Improved attitude with firm intention to quit using tobacco within the next 6 months.

During year three, (prior to the state-wide ban on smoking) not only did a significant number of adults report attempts to quit smoking or reduce use of tobacco products, changes in attitude about clean indoor air were observed among adults. At the conclusion of the program 16% more adults supported a no smoking policy in restaurants and at indoor sporting events or concerts.



Goal: Reducing Exposure To Second Hand Smoke

Program	Target Population	# Served	Significant Changes
<i>Help Me Grow</i>	Lorain County Families	518	* Increased awareness about dangers of secondhand smoke. * Change in attitude with intention to not allow smoking inside the home. * Families signed Smoke-Free Home Pledge.

Year Four Action

Goal: Preventing Youth From Initiating Tobacco Use

Program	Target Population	# Served	Significant Changes
Elyria Schools – <i>LifeSkills, Project ALERT & STAMP</i>	All youth Grades 5, 6, & 7	300	* Significant change in proportion of youth with a firm intention to never use tobacco. * Significant improvement in attitude about social acceptance of tobacco.

Goal: Reducing Tobacco Use Among Adults

Program	Target Population	# Served	Significant Changes
Catholic Charities Services of Lorain County - <i>Quitting for Life</i>	Low income including the homeless	35	* Greater percentage of tobacco users who attempted to quit for a day or longer. * 60 days after the program, 20% of participants reported they were tobacco free. * Average number of cigarettes smoked per day decreased.
Lorain County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services (LCADA – <i>Fresh Start</i>)	Recovering addicts	7	* Increased awareness about benefits of quitting tobacco use. * Increased intention to quite using tobacco within the next 60 days.

Results

Youth Tobacco Use

In 2006 the Communities that Care youth survey was repeated providing useful comparison data. The survey was administered for the first time among 12th graders in addition to 6th, 8th, and 10th graders. For purposes of comparison, 12th grade data was excluded.

Tobacco Use / Lifetime Use		Overall	6 th	8 th	10 th
Cigarettes	2003	32.5%	13.0%	37.0%	47.2%
	2006	26.6%	8.2%	27.8%	42.4%
Smokeless Tobacco	2003	8.5%	3.5%	8.8%	13.1%
	2006	9.4%	2.5%	8.4%	14.8%
Tobacco Use / Past 30 Day Use					
Cigarettes	2003	11.7%	3.0%	13.0%	18.9%
	2006	11.6%	1.5%	10.5%	19.5%
Smokeless Tobacco	2003	3.5%	1.2%	3.7%	5.5%
	2006	4.9%	0.7%	4.1%	6.7%

2003 and 2006 Communities that Care Youth Survey

2003 AND 2006 COMPARISONS:

* Overall, when 2003 and 2006 survey results were compared, an improvement in lifetime cigarettes use among Lorain County youth was observed (32.5% compared with 26.6%).

* On the other hand, past 30 day cigarette use remained stable between 2003 to 2006, overall (11.7% compared with 11.6%).

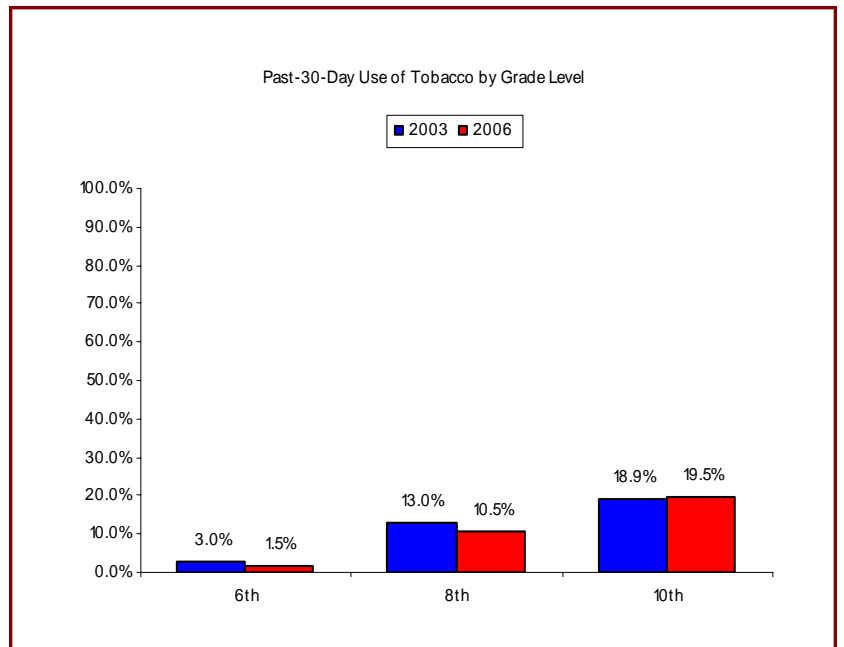
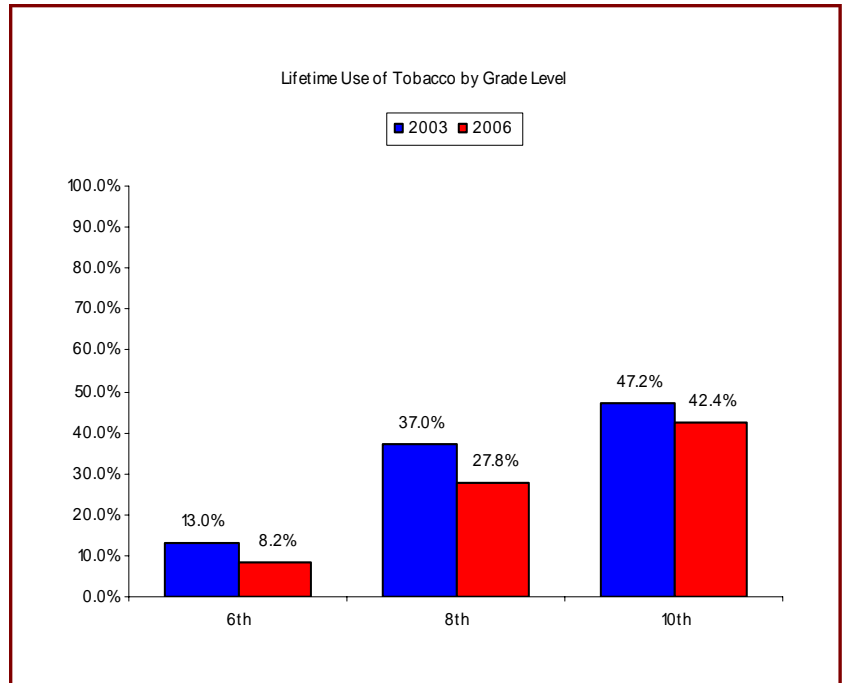
* As noted at baseline, when analyzed by grade, older adolescents were more likely to be smokers.

* One in every five 10th graders in Lorain County had smoked cigarettes at least once in their lifetime compared to one in every ten 6th graders.

* While the incidence of tobacco use increased dramatically at the 8th grade level, this grade level also exhibited the greatest decline in lifetime tobacco use from 2003 to 2006 (37% compared to 27.8%).

* Similarly, 8th graders reported a modest decline in the past 30 day use of tobacco.

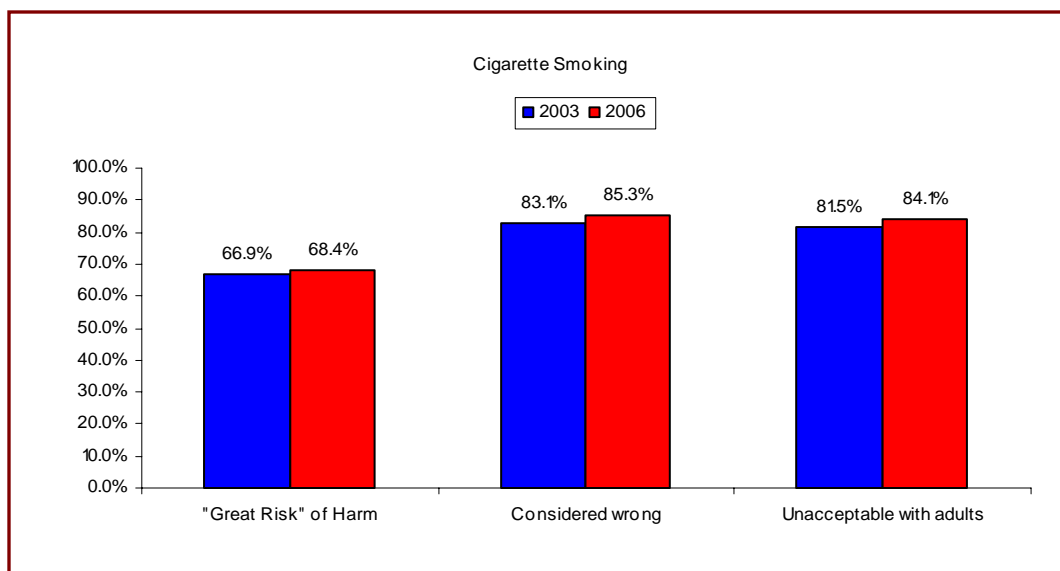
* Both lifetime and past 30 day smokeless tobacco use between 2003 and 2006 remained stable.



2003 AND 2006 COMPARISONS

Influences on Cigarette Smoking

When 2003 and 2006 survey results are compared with respect to influential factors, that is, perceived risk of harm, personal approval/disapproval, and social norms of adults, a positive trend in attitude is observed, overall. This trend is consistent with the declining lifetime tobacco use rates noted in the chart under "Results" on page 6. This result might imply that, perhaps, social norms are beginning to shift which in turn influences tobacco use initiation. However, the shift is minuscule which might be attributable to the slow changing nature of social norms, which means there is still work to be done to continue to influence youth smoking habits.



While the overall countywide survey showed little attitude change between 2003 and 2006, mini-grant results clearly indicate significant attitude changes for youth participating in prevention programs. For example, there was an increased proportion of youth with a firm intention to never use tobacco and a significant change in attitude about social acceptance of tobacco use. These results mean that prevention efforts are working and Lorain County should continue to educate youth about the harmful effects of cigarette smoking.

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