



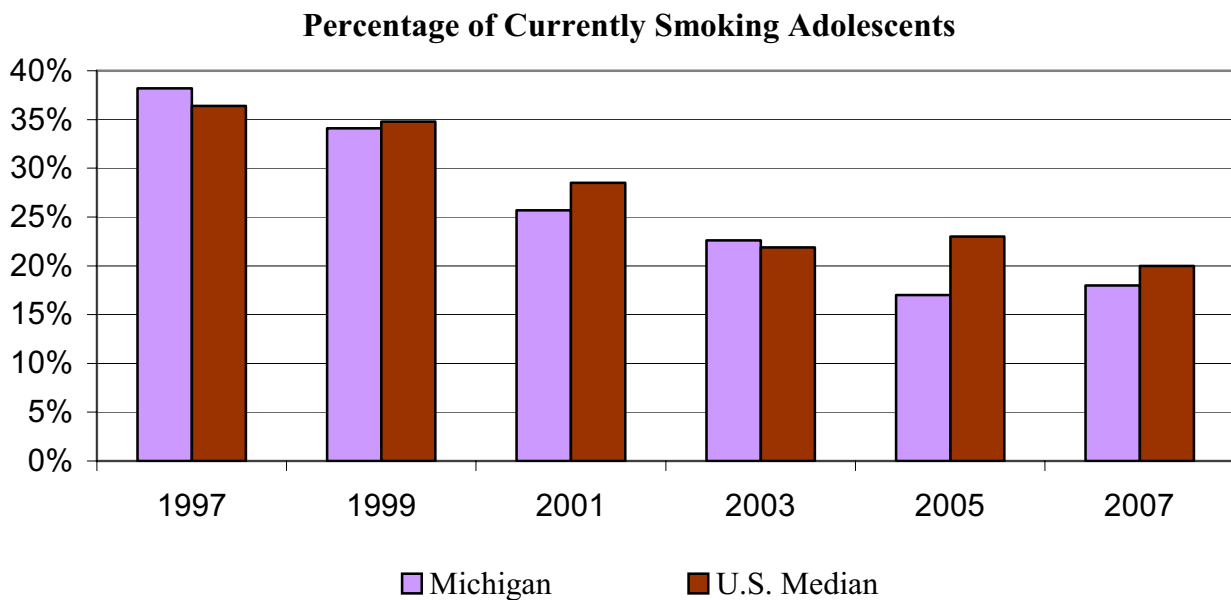
## Topic: Risky Health Behaviors

### 6. Adolescent Tobacco Use

Tobacco use is fundamentally a pediatric disease because most addiction to tobacco begins among youth under the age of 18. Over 90% of Michigan adults who have smoked for a number of years, began while they were teenagers. Nicotine addiction begins when most tobacco users are under the age of 18, a person who hasn't started smoking by age 19 is unlikely to ever become a smoker.

Adolescent use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs is measured by the biennial Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

#### *How are we doing?*



Over the past 10 years, the smoking prevalence among youth in Michigan has declined over 50%, from 38.2% in 1997 to the current smoking prevalence of 18.0% in 2007.

#### *How Does Michigan compare with the U.S.?*

Michigan's adolescent smoking rate has been below the national adolescent smoking rate for the past two reporting years, 2005 and 2007. Between 2003 and 2005, Michigan was one of only four states that experienced a decrease in adolescent smoking rates, declining over 24%, while the national adolescent smoking rate increased approximately 5%.

#### *How are different populations affected?*

In 2007, the Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey showed that African American students were least likely to report being a current smoker at 6.6%. White students were 3 times more likely to report being a current smoker at 20.6%, and Hispanic students were 4.4 times more likely to report being a current smoker at 29.3%. In addition the proportion of current smokers tended to increase with grade level and age. The smoking prevalence among 12<sup>th</sup> graders was twice that of 9<sup>th</sup> graders (27.0% vs. 13.8%) with



the sharpest increase in current smokers happening between the 11<sup>th</sup> grade and 12<sup>th</sup> grade. During this time, current smoking rates increase 35% from 17.4% in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade to 27.0% in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

### ***What is the Department of Community Health doing to improve this indicator?***

The MDCH provides support and assistance to local community agencies and tobacco reduction coalitions to increase youth involvement in tobacco-free policy activities, such as educating tobacco retailers on the Michigan Youth Tobacco Act (YTA) to prevent underage access to tobacco.

Youth access to tobacco has decreased through the enforcement of the YTA. This act prohibits the sale of tobacco by retailers to minors, prohibits youth from purchasing tobacco and adults from purchasing tobacco for youth, and also prohibits possession of tobacco among minors. Local prosecuting attorneys and other law enforcement agencies support the YTA. The MDCH conducts annual, random, unannounced inspections to ensure compliance with existing laws. Illegal sales of tobacco products to minors from tobacco retailers have decreased almost 70% since 1994.

The MDCH promotes, implements and enforces local smoke-free work site and public regulations, such as 24/7 tobacco-free campus policies for public and private schools in Michigan. These policies prohibit the use of tobacco in any form, at any time (including non-school hours) while on school grounds and during any school-sponsored functions held off campus.

Studies have shown that smoke-free policies help prevent kids from smoking, in that it helps in the de-normalization of tobacco use. The Department uses the Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education to help improve students' health behaviors. In kindergarten through twelfth grades, over one million students in Michigan receive education concerning tobacco use and other substance abuse.

In 2004, the cigarette tax was increased from \$1.25 per pack to \$2.00 per pack, an increase of 60.0%. Studies have shown that every 10% increase in the price of cigarettes will reduce youth smoking by about seven percent and overall cigarette consumption by about four percent. Michigan's adolescent smoking rate has decreased approximately 24% since the tax increase and continues to decline, while in many states smoking rates among their youth have become stagnant.