



# Recognizing 25 Years of Tobacco Control Success and Collaboration

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This year, the Tobacco Control Network (TCN), an ASTHO peer network, celebrates the [25th anniversary of its successful work supporting state and territorial tobacco control programs](#) in their common pursuit of working towards a nation free from the health and disease burdens of tobacco use. [TCN was formed in 1994](#) as an information sharing initiative between CDC, the National Cancer Institute, and the tobacco control programs in each state and territorial health agency. Following [CDC's creation of the National Tobacco Control Program in 1999](#), the network reorganized, with a focus on increasing the importance of tobacco control in state and territorial health agencies and fostering collaboration and communication among state and territorial tobacco control and cessation programs. With the support of ASTHO and funding from CDC's Office on Smoking and Health, TCN continues to facilitate education, information sharing, and collaboration among state and territorial tobacco control stakeholders across the country.

In 1994, the [adult cigarette smoking rate was 25.5 percent](#). The most recent data available from 2017 indicates this figure [now stands at 14 percent](#). This reduction is not an accident; it is the result of strong tobacco control policies and programs implemented by states, territories, and other public health stakeholders. "For the past 25 years, state and territorial public health agencies have been leaders in supporting cost-effective policies and interventions proven to have a tremendous impact on population health," says ASTHO Chief Medical Officer Marcus Plescia. "This includes tobacco taxes, clean indoor air policies, the availability of state tobacco quitlines, and comprehensive tobacco control and cessation programs."

To support TCN, ASTHO collaborates with CDC and a peer-elected executive committee of state and territorial tobacco control staff to ensure that TCN provides the best information and resources to assist state and territorial tobacco control programs in their pursuit of tobacco-free communities. Luci Longoria, current chair of TCN and [Oregon tobacco control program manager](#), has witnessed several tobacco control successes in Oregon over the past 25 years. In 2007, Oregon adopted a comprehensive clean air act requiring indoor workplaces and public places to be smoke-free. In 2017, Oregon passed a state-wide tobacco 21 law. As part of a larger 2012 transition, Oregon Medicaid Accountable Care Organizations changed to a pay-for-performance model that incentivizes reducing the prevalence of cigarette smoking. In addition, all addiction and mental health residential programs licensed and funded by the Oregon Health Authority are required be tobacco-free and provide cessation and education resources for staff and individuals receiving services.

"Tobacco control has proven time and time again that it is one of the most impactful public health accomplishments," Longoria says. "We get results through coordinated, multi-faceted



policy approaches informed by data and science, coupled with tenacious partnership mobilization. This is why the Tobacco Control Network is crucial to our success. Because we must achieve results, we are curious about how we can be most effective, learning from each other to help us all do the best job possible for our shared mission."

Tobacco control continues to face new challenges and [a changing regulatory landscape](#). The recent [epidemic of youth e-cigarette use](#) threatens to impact long-term population health, as rapidly growing numbers of young people are put at risk for nicotine addiction. As this happens, millions of adults continue to use combustible tobacco products that are harmful and often deadly, [despite a desire to quit](#). Through it all, state and territorial tobacco control programs are on the ground implementing data-driven cessation programs and educating stakeholders on sound public health policies that reduce the health burdens of tobacco use. "State and territorial health agencies continue to be well positioned to further reduce tobacco use across the nation," says Plescia. "Aided by the appropriate funding and support from initiatives such as the Tobacco Control Network, we can expect to see less tobacco-related death and disease and improved population health as a result of their strong work."

*For more information and resources, visit the [TCN website](#). Any questions about TCN and any requests to join the TCN mailing list can be sent to [tcn@astho.org](mailto:tcn@astho.org).*

