

Intersection of COVID-19 and Tobacco Control

This technical assistance package contains a collection of state case studies, research, virtual event recordings, and online resources prepared by ASTHO and the Tobacco Control Network, the ASTHO peer network that serves health agency tobacco control programs and their partners. Youth and young adult tobacco use have reached record high rates in recent years, emphasizing the importance of understanding the intersection of tobacco use and vulnerability to the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage states to consider using these resources in their own work to emphasize this important intersection of public health priorities.

State Case Studies

- **[Smoking and COVID-19 – New York State](#)**

New York State Department of Health provides web resources for those hoping to quit smoking or vaping and emphasizes that those with underlying medical conditions often caused by smoking are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

- **[COVID-19 & Smoking: What We Know – Montana](#)**

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services released a fact sheet on how cigarette smoking and vaping increases one's risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

- **[Smoking and Respiratory Infections, including COVID-19 – Indiana](#)**

Indiana Department of Health released a factsheet on how cigarette smoking and secondhand smoke exposure can weaken the immune system, compromise lung function, and increase susceptibility to respiratory viruses such as COVID-19.

- **[Commercial Tobacco and COVID-19 – Minnesota](#)**

Minnesota Department of Health web page shares the harmful effects of commercial tobacco on heart and lung disease, in addition to frequently asked questions and answers on the relationship between smoking and COVID-19.

- **[COVID-19 Pandemic Information – Minnesota](#)**

Minnesota Department of Health's Cessation Services Contractor, Quit Partner, developed the following webpage with tips, strategies, and resources for those worried about smoking or vaping and COVID-19.

- **[Smoking and vaping can increase your COVID-19 risks – Idaho](#)**

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare published a factsheet to portray how smoking and vaping increase one's risk of severe complications from COVID-19 infection, in addition to how the Idaho Quitline can be a resource.

CDC Resources

- The CDC continues to discourage smoking and provides resources to help individuals who smoke quit. Being a current or former user of tobacco products make you more likely to get very sick from COVID-19. More information can be found online here:
 - [Smoking and Tobacco Use](#)
 - [Tips From Former Tobacco Product Users](#)
 - [Health Benefits of Quitting Smoking](#)

ASTHO Resources

- [Opportunities and Strategies for Tobacco Prevention During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
This brief report spotlights initial findings on tobacco use and COVID-19, opportunities for tobacco prevention during the pandemic, guidance for communicating risk, and recommendations for engaging state health officials.
- [COVID-19 Pandemic Underscores Need for Tobacco Control Policies](#)
This ASTHO blog post highlights how legislation regulating tobacco, e-cigarettes, and vapor products discourage tobacco use and improve cessation rates while also presenting an opportunity for state and local governments to address increased risk of COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Taking the Smoke Out of COVID-19](#)
This ASTHO blog post shares how the pandemic has intensified the need for strong tobacco control policies and marketing campaigns, as tobacco use continues to contribute to deaths and hospitalizations resulting from the COVID-19 infection.

Partner Resources

- [COVID-19 and Tobacco – American Lung Association](#)
This American Lung Association factsheet overviews the harms associated with e-cigarette use, the persistent racial and socioeconomic inequities of the pandemic, and how being a current or former cigarette smoker increases the risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- [U.S. Tobacco Policy and Enforcement During COVID-19 Shutdowns – Public Health Law Center](#)
The Public Health Law Center released a webinar which examines the intersection of state and local policy responses to COVID-19 and commercial tobacco prevention and control.
- [Strategies to Increase Reach During the COVID-19 Pandemic – North American Quilline Consortium](#)
An NAQC webinar presented data on current call volumes to 1-800-QUIT-NOW followed by an overview of common strategies that two states have used to successfully increase reach.

- **[Innovative Strategies to Promote Quitlines During the Pandemic – North American Quitline Consortium](#)**

A NAQC webinar highlights innovative practices for promoting quitlines during the pandemic, features free resources available from the iCOVIDQuit Campaign, and shares how states are utilizing social media and other promotional strategies to increase call volume.

Journal Research

- **[The Impact of Tobacco Use on COVID-19 Outcomes: A Systematic Review – Journal of Smoking Cessation](#)**

A *Journal of Smoking Cessation* analysis of human subjects-research studies including those with lab-confirmed COVID-19 infections, found strong evidence that tobacco use increases risks of mortality and disease severity/progression among COVID-19 patients. 15-of-23 studies found that tobacco use was associated with significantly higher risk of COVID-19 disease severity or progression, while 15-of-32 studies found tobacco use increased risk of death among COVID-19 patients.

- **[Are smokers protected against SARS-CoV-2 infection \(COVID-19\)? The origins of the myth – Primary Care Respiratory Journal](#)**

A *Primary Care Respiratory Journal* article encourages healthcare professionals to address patient tobacco use in order to combat misinformation around smoking and COVID-19. It additionally reviews the flaws in methodology and misinterpretation from various studies that led to claims suggesting that individuals who use tobacco products were protected against SARS-CoV-2 infection.

- **[Association Between Youth Smoking, Electronic Cigarette Use, and COVID-19 – Journal of Adolescent Health](#)**

A *Journal of Adolescent Health* analysis which assessed the relationship between adolescent cigarette and e-cigarette use and COVID-19 diagnosis, found that e-cigarette users were five times more likely to receive a COVID-19 diagnosis and seven times more likely among dual users.

- **[Tobacco industry influence during the COVID-19 pandemic – Lancet Oncology](#)**

A *Lancet Oncology* article reports that The Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2021 determined the extent to which tobacco companies used the COVID-19 pandemic to engage with relief efforts, form relationships with government figures, and attempt to influence policy with at least 10 countries designated tobacco products as essential goods during the pandemic. Notably, in 2020, the tobacco industry invested \$28 million in the United States on lobbying efforts to reduce tobacco control measures, while Philip Morris International spent an estimated \$60 million on social contributions related to the pandemic to portray a public image of trust and goodwill.