

Summary of Findings

The following is a summary of the overall findings of this study completed in June 2006 regarding the attitudes and behaviors related to tobacco use among Tompkins County (New York) adults.

Tobacco Use Findings:

1. The current smoking rate in Tompkins County is 18.8%, 18.2% smoking only cigarettes and an additional 0.6% both smoking cigarettes as well as using other types of tobacco products. This smoking rate is low compared to the rate found in other Central New York counties recently surveyed (hereafter referred to as “regional rates”) and slightly higher than the 18% current statewide cigarette smoking rate reported by the NYS Department of Health.
2. Use of other tobacco products (those other than cigarettes) among Tompkins County residents is very low, with the most common other type of tobacco used being cigars (1.1% indicate that they currently use cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars). Only 2.0% of the surveyed residents reported using any non-cigarette type of tobacco product.
3. The overall tobacco use rate among Tompkins County residents is 20.2%, with 18.2% only smoking cigarettes, 1.4% only using non-cigarette tobacco products, and 0.6% using a combination of both cigarette and non-cigarette tobacco. The overall use of tobacco by Tompkins County residents is significantly less than the regional average of 26.2% of the residents using tobacco.
4. Among Tompkins County adults, gender, age, and education level are significant factors correlated to tobacco use, with males, residents age 35 to 64 years old, and those individuals with less than a 4-year college degree most likely to be tobacco users.
5. Smokers in Tompkins County commonly purchase their cigarettes at an Indian reservation or enterprise, with 49.8% reporting to do so – similar to the 53.5% rate found in Tompkins County in 2004, but significantly lower than current regional rates. Smokers in Tompkins County are far less likely to purchase their cigarettes from a website or on the Internet, with only 3.2% reporting to do so –significantly decreased from the 28.3% rate among smokers in Tompkins County in 2004.

Tobacco Cessation Findings:

6. The majority of Tompkins County adults, including both smokers and non-smokers, have been asked whether or not they smoke by health professionals in the past twelve months (over 70% were asked), a very typical rate compared to regional rates. This current rate of 72.1% is significantly increased from the 2004 rate of 62.5%. Current smokers are significantly more likely to have been asked than nonsmokers (90% vs. 68%), and those individuals age 65 or older are the least likely to have been asked if they smoke.
7. More than half of the sampled Tompkins County residents (51.9%) have ever heard of the New York State Smokers’ Quitline; this level of familiarity is typical compared to residents of neighboring counties (rate as low as 42.9% in one county - the eight-county regional average was 51.7%). This rate has dramatically increased from the rate in Tompkins County in 2004, when only 35.4% of the residents had heard of the quitline. Current cigarette smokers are far more likely to be familiar with the quitline than nonsmokers (70% vs. 48%). The most common way that Tompkins County residents learn about this free quitline continues to be via television, with radio the second most common source. In spite of the high rate of familiarity with the New York State Smokers’ Quitline, very few Tompkins County residents have ever called this quitline (2.5% of the residents who had heard of it, increased from 0.6% in 2004).
8. Among cigarette smokers in Tompkins County, 75.5% have been advised to quit by health professionals in the past twelve months, a rate significantly increased from the 57.5% rate in Tompkins County in 2004, and a rate that is very high currently among Central New York counties. By far, the most common advice provided by healthcare professionals is to prescribe nicotine patches, gum, spray, inhalers, and/or pills. Smokers who have been advised to quit in Tompkins County report having been advised to call the New York State Smokers’ Quitline at a rate that is significantly lower than the regional average – only 5.7% were advised to call the quitline, with an average for the eight regional counties of 16.2%.
9. During the past year, 50.3% of the Tompkins County smokers have attempted to quit smoking, a rate very similar to regional averages. Females are more than twice as likely as males to have stopped smoking for at least one day attempting to quit in the past year – 66% vs. 31%. However, the majority of smokers who attempted to quit remained

tobacco-free for less than one month (79.8%). The average number of attempts to quit smoking in the past three years among current Tompkins County smokers is 1.7 attempts.

10. Over half of the Tompkins County smokers report that they want to quit smoking (51.4%), a very typical regional rate. The most commonly reported approach to quitting smoking was to “Give up cigarettes all at once – Cold Turkey” (86.6% of the attempted quitters).
11. Among current Tompkins County smokers, when asked the effect that the smokefree workplace law enacted in 2003 in New York State has had upon their smoking, 0.6% indicated that The Clean Indoor Air Act has caused them to plan to quit, a rate quite low compared to neighboring county rates; 35.8% reported that the law had caused them to reduce the number of cigarettes they smoke, a rather high regional rate.
12. Among Tompkins County former smokers, when asked the effect that the smokefree workplace law has had upon their smoking, 18.0% indicated that The Clean Indoor Air Act has caused them to already quit smoking, a rate very high compared to neighboring county rates.
13. The most commonly reported approach to quitting smoking that was successfully utilized by Tompkins County former smokers was to “Give up cigarettes all at once – Cold Turkey” (68.8% of the former smokers).
14. In Tompkins County, 65.0% of the smokers report familiarity with local tobacco cessation services, significantly increased from the 2004 rate of 40.6% in Tompkins County and very high to the current regional rate. Smokers from low income level households and those with 4+ year degrees are least likely to be familiar with local tobacco cessation services. Less than half (36.7%) of the current Tompkins County smokers are interested in learning more about cessation services, a rate that is similar to that of neighboring counties and significantly increased from 19.7% in Tompkins County in 2004.

Spreading the Message About the Dangers of Tobacco Findings:

15. Approximately 40% of the Tompkins County residents (40.5%) had heard of Tobacco Free Tompkins before completing this survey, while 46.3% had heard of Reality Check. Both of these familiarity rates are significantly increased from Tompkins County levels in 2004, and familiarity with Reality Check is significantly higher in Tompkins County than throughout other regional counties, where the average Reality Check familiarity rate is 38.1%. Younger county residents are most likely to have heard of these organizations, as are those individuals with some college education but no 4-year degree, and those residents from lower income households. The source where residents most commonly have heard of Tobacco Free Tompkins is the radio. The rate of hearing about a tobacco community partnership on television is significantly lower among Tompkins County residents than among residents of neighboring counties while the rate of learning from the radio is higher. Familiarity with Tobacco Free Tompkins is different between smokers and nonsmokers, 50% of the smokers had heard of Tobacco Free Tompkins while only 38% of the nonsmokers had heard of the community partnership.
16. Only about one out of every seven Tompkins County residents (13.1%) recalls noticing a Tobacco Free Tompkins tobacco awareness advertisement recently, such as *Smile of an Ex-smoker* or *Free Nicotine Patches* newspaper ads, a rate significantly lower than the regional average rate of 22.3%.
17. Television is by far the most common medium where residents recall seeing anti-tobacco advertising (produced by Tobacco Free Tompkins as well as possibly produced by groups other than Tobacco Free Tompkins). Over 70% of the Tompkins County adults (71.4%) report noticing television advertising about the dangers of tobacco or quitting smoking, significantly increased from the rate in Tompkins County in 2004 of 56.3%, however, this rate is significantly lower than the current regional rate of 75.1%. Younger residents report noticing these advertisements most frequently. Similarly, 43.9% of the Tompkins County adults report noticing advertising about the dangers of tobacco or quitting smoking on the radio during the past 30 days – significantly increased from 27.6% in 2004. Noticing advertising about the dangers of tobacco or quitting smoking in the newspaper during the past 30 days is also reported by 43.9% of the residents, with males far more likely to report this exposure than females (53% vs. 35%).
18. The majority of Tompkins County adults read newspapers (85.3%) and the Pennysaver/Pennyshoppers (65.9%). Both of these rates are similar to that of current Central New York counties. However, consistent with national trends, exposure to both of these types of printed media among Tompkins County residents has decreased significantly since 2004. In 2004, 91.1% of Tompkins County adults reported to read newspapers.
19. Regarding media exposure in general, it is notable that the daily number of hours of both television watched and radio listening among Tompkins County adults has increased significantly since 2004. In general, younger Tompkins

County residents tend to spend more time listening to the radio while older residents spend more time watching television.

20. The residents of Tompkins County believe that smoking is portrayed far more negatively than positively by the media in news stories (59.9% negatively and 4.9% positively). The rate of agreement that smoking is portrayed negatively by the media in news stories has significantly increased among Tompkins County residents since 2004 when only 52.1% reported that smoking is portrayed negatively in news stories.

Tobacco Advertising Findings:

21. Tompkins County adults tend to believe that tobacco advertising should be allowed (only about 33% indicate that tobacco advertising should never be allowed), with males, younger adults, and current smokers most likely to approve of allowing the advertising.
22. Residents report most commonly currently seeing tobacco advertising at convenience stores and markets and in shop windows where tobacco is sold. In general, these rates in Tompkins County tend to be very typical of region rates. Significant increases in exposure to tobacco advertising were found in Tompkins County since 2004 for poster or billboard advertising (changed from 31.6% to 40.6%), as well as on shop windows or in stores where tobacco is sold (changed from 62.4% to 68.3%).
23. Over 80% of the surveyed residents (80.7%) report noticing smoking in movies, typical of residents of neighboring counties and not significantly different than the Tompkins County rate in 2004. Opinions regarding smoking in movies tend to be that G, PG, and PG-13 rated movies should show no smoking (64.7% agree with this statement, not significantly different than the 59.7% county rate in 2004 but very low compared to current regional rates). Notably, over 50% of the current smokers indicate that they believe that G, PG, and PG-13 rated movies should show no smoking.

Indoor Secondhand Smoke Exposure Findings:

24. An overwhelming majority of Tompkins County respondents (92.7%) consider exposure to secondhand smoke to be harmful; 74.8 % indicated they believe it is *very harmful*. This rate is not significantly different from the regional average of 90.9%. Almost 80% of the current smokers (78.9%) consider exposure to secondhand smoke to be harmful.
25. Approximately four out of every five Tompkins County adults (83.6%) report that they do not allow smoking in their homes; similarly, 78.3% indicate that they do not allow smoking in their vehicles. The likelihood of not allowing smoking in one's home has increased significantly in Tompkins County between 2004 and 2006, from a rate of 77.0% to the current level of 83.6%. Both of these rates of denying indoor secondhand smoke exposure are very high compared to regional rates. Note that almost 60% of current smokers do not allow smoking in their homes, while over 30% of the smokers do not allow smoking in their vehicles. Both of these nonsmoking policy decisions appear to be significantly correlated with education level, with high educated residents less likely to allow smoking in their home and/or vehicle.
26. Approximately one in ten currently employed Tompkins County residents (11.1%) had been exposed to smoking in his or her work area or work vehicle in the past seven days, not significantly changed from 8.3% in 2004. Only 5.1% of the residents reported seeing someone smoking inside public places in their community, a rate very low among Central New York counties.
27. Approximately one in three Tompkins County adults reports visiting a bar at least once in the past month, a rate that is significantly lower from in 2004. However, almost 40% of the persons who had visited a bar in the past month had seen people smoking in the bar (38.9%), a rate significantly higher than reported in 2004 when only 9.8% of the Tompkins County bar visitors reported being exposed to secondhand smoke while in Tompkins County bars. The current rate of exposure to secondhand smoke at bars of 38.9% is very typical for Central New York.
28. Approximately 30% of the Tompkins County residents report to rent their home. Less than half of these renters (38.7%) report that there is a policy that prohibits indoor smoking in his or her building. Nonsmokers are more than twice as likely as smokers to have a policy in their buildings. Only 27.2% of the Tompkins County renters report that they are in favor of a/the policy that prohibits smoking in their buildings. Interestingly, 8% of the current smokers report to favor this type of policy.

Outdoor Secondhand Smoke Exposure Findings:

29. Among the six types of public outdoor locations that were investigated (public outdoor events like auto shows, festivals, or concerts; public beaches; public parks; public playgrounds; public building entryways; and grounds of hospitals or medical facilities), public building entryways and medical facilities are by far the most frequently visited by Tompkins County residents (96.6% report visiting public building entryways in the past year, while 88.9% report visiting medical facility grounds in the past year).
30. Among those residents who had attended these types of public outdoor locations, exposure to secondhand smoke was reported most frequently by persons passing through public building entryways, and by visitors at public outdoor events like auto shows, festivals, or concerts. Almost 60% of the persons who reported passing through public building entryways indicated that they are exposed to secondhand smoke at least sometimes when doing so. Similarly, almost 50% of the persons who reported attending public outdoor events like auto shows, festivals, or concerts indicated that they are exposed to secondhand smoke at least sometimes when attending.
31. There appears to be a large level of support among Tompkins County residents for reducing secondhand smoke exposure at public outdoor locations, with over 70% of the residents supporting either restricting or completely eliminating cigarette smoking at each of the six types of locations studied. These levels of support for restricting outdoor smoking were very high among neighboring counties. The greatest support for restricting smoking was reported for public playgrounds; 89.6% of the surveyed residents suggested either restricting smoking or not allowing it at all at public playgrounds. Similarly, 87.5% of the surveyed residents suggested either restricting smoking or not allowing it at all on the grounds of hospitals or medical facilities. Support was also demonstrated for restricting smoking at public building entryways; 85.6% of the surveyed residents suggested either restricting smoking or not allowing it at all at public building entryways. Females tend to be more supportive of restricting cigarette smoking than males.
32. Even *among current cigarette smokers*, there is a large degree of support for the notion of at least restricting cigarette smoking to certain areas at public outdoor locations. For example 76.2% of the *Tompkins County current cigarette smokers* believe that smoking at playgrounds should be restricted or not allowed at all, and 65.7% of the *Tompkins County current cigarette smokers* believe that smoking on the grounds of hospitals or medical facilities should be restricted or not allowed at all.

Perceived Reduced Harm of Tobacco Findings:

33. About one in four current smokers in Tompkins County (25.2%) reported that he or she had switched to low tar or nicotine cigarettes to reduce his or her health risk. This rate is very typical among regional counties. In Tompkins County, females are far more likely than males to have switched to low tar or nicotine cigarettes to reduce their health risk – 41% vs. 13%.
34. Four alternative tobacco products, alternatives to regular cigarettes, were studied and among Tompkins County residents. Few residents of Tompkins County agree that using alternative tobacco products (light cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, cigars, or pipe tobacco) is safer than smoking regular cigarettes. The rates of agreement with reduced harm of tobacco ranged from a low of 6.3%, agreeing that smoking cigars is safer than regular cigarettes, to a high of 9.1%, agreeing that smoking light cigarettes is safer than regular cigarettes.