

# Healthy Chicago Data Brief

## 2017 Youth Tobacco Use



Erratum: Percent change in youth cigarette smoking between 2011 and 2017 has been corrected to 56%

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of disease and death. Almost all tobacco use begins during youth and young adulthood. **Chicago has made historic progress in our fight to reduce smoking among youth and young adults**, but we have more work to do to ensure the next generation is tobacco-free.

### Cigarette Use

**Youth cigarette use in Chicago is at an all-time low.** According to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **only 6% of Chicago high school students reported current cigarette smoking** in 2017. This represents a 56% decrease in cigarette smoking among youth since 2011. In 2011, 1 in 4 high schoolers in Chicago smoked cigarettes. Today that number had fallen to less than 1 in 16 high school students (Figure 1).

### Other Tobacco Use

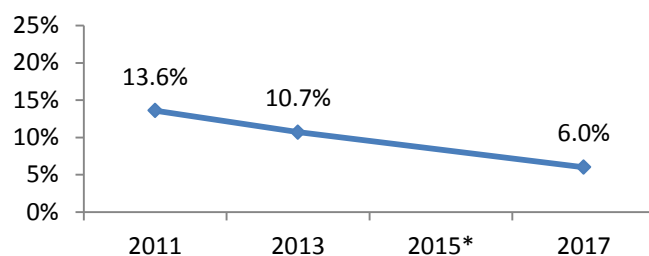
Even with this historic progress, continued work is needed to prevent the use of other tobacco products, including cigars, electronic cigarettes and smokeless tobacco, among youth and young adults. Tobacco use in any form by youth can be harmful and lead to nicotine addiction among other serious health consequences.

In 2017, **14.5% of Chicago high school students reported current use of any tobacco product**, 7.2% reported current cigar use and 6.6% reported use of electronic vapor products, including e-cigarettes. This is the first time data on e-cigarette use by Chicago teens has been available (Figure 2).

### Young Adults and Tobacco 21

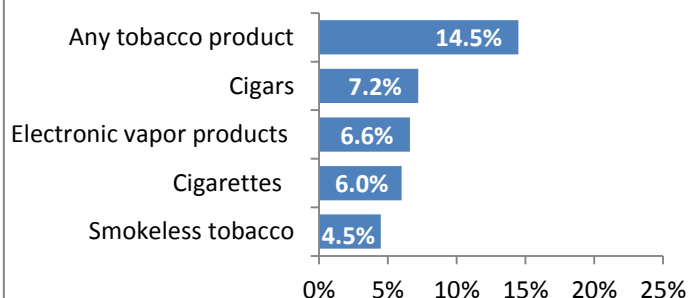
In 2016, Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago City Council raised the minimum legal purchasing age for tobacco to 21. Immediately after this new law was implemented, data from the Chicago Department of Public Health's 2016 Healthy Chicago Survey revealed a dramatic decline in the rate of cigarette and e-cigarette use among residents 18-20 years-old, indicating the impact public policies have on tobacco use. In 2016, 9.7% of residents between 18-20 years-old reported use of cigarettes or e-cigarettes versus 15.2% one year earlier representing a 36% decrease (Figure 3).

Figure 1. % High School Students Who Currently Smoke Cigarettes – Chicago, 2011-2017



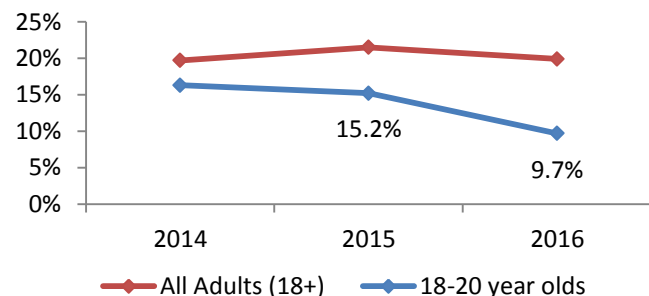
Data Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
\* YRBS data for the City of Chicago was unavailable in 2015

Figure 2. Tobacco Product Use Among High School Students – Chicago, 2017



Data Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Figure 3. % Adults Who Currently Smoke Cigarettes or E-Cigarettes, by Age Group – Chicago, 2014-2016



Data Source: Healthy Chicago Survey, Chicago Department of Public Health

## Improving Healthy Equity

The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) is committed to achieving health equity, ensuring every resident has the opportunity and resources they need to get and stay healthy.

Tobacco use disproportionately affects people who live in communities that experience high economic hardship, as well as racial and ethnic minorities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people. According to the CDC, a mix of factors including social determinants of health, tobacco industry influence and inconsistent implementation of tobacco control policies contribute to these disparities. Population-based tobacco control efforts, including those being implemented by CDPH, are effective at reducing tobacco use overall. Additional strategies designed to reach populations facing the greatest burden of tobacco use are needed to continue to improve health equity.

### How do you prevent tobacco use among youth and young adults?

The most effective tobacco control efforts contain several strategies working together to **make tobacco use less accessible, affordable and attractive**. These include policy changes such as higher tobacco prices, youth access restrictions, and smoke-free laws; mass media campaigns; and other sustained community efforts.

### What is Chicago doing to prevent and reduce tobacco use?

Under Mayor Emanuel's leadership, Chicago has become a national leader in tobacco control, by:

- Prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to people under age 21.
- Prohibiting price discounting and coupon redemption for tobacco products by retailers.
- Regulating the sale of flavored tobacco products, including menthol, within 500 feet of high schools.
- Regulating e-cigarettes, including prohibiting their sale to minors, moving them behind the counter in stores, prohibiting e-cigarettes wherever cigarettes are banned and requiring dealers to be licensed.
- Prohibiting the use of smokeless tobacco at baseball stadiums.
- Increasing the cost by raising the cigarette tax by 50 cents and establishing a tax on e-cigarette liquid.
- Doubling fines for illegal tobacco sales to those who sell untaxed cigarettes or tobacco products to minors.
- Expanding Chicago's smoke-free environments to include all parks, beaches and numerous college campuses.
- Launching a series of public education campaigns focused on the products and marketing tactics that the tobacco industry uses to hook young people, which have featured menthol, flavored tobacco and e-cigarettes.
- Investing in local cessation resources to help young adults and others who want to quit.

### Additional Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/about/osh/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/about/osh/)

U.S. Federal Drug Administration (FDA): [www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/AboutCTP/ucm383225](http://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/AboutCTP/ucm383225)

The Truth Initiative: [truthinitiative.org](http://truthinitiative.org)

Quit smoking: Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW | [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov) | [www.becomeanex.org](http://www.becomeanex.org)



## ChicagoHealthAtlas.org

The Chicago Health Atlas is a website developed by the Chicago Department of Public Health and the City Tech Collaborative to allow users to easily explore, analyze and download health-related data for the city of Chicago. Users can view data on their desktop or mobile device for more than 160 data indicators to explore the demographics, health outcomes, behaviors and social characteristics of Chicago residents and their neighborhoods.