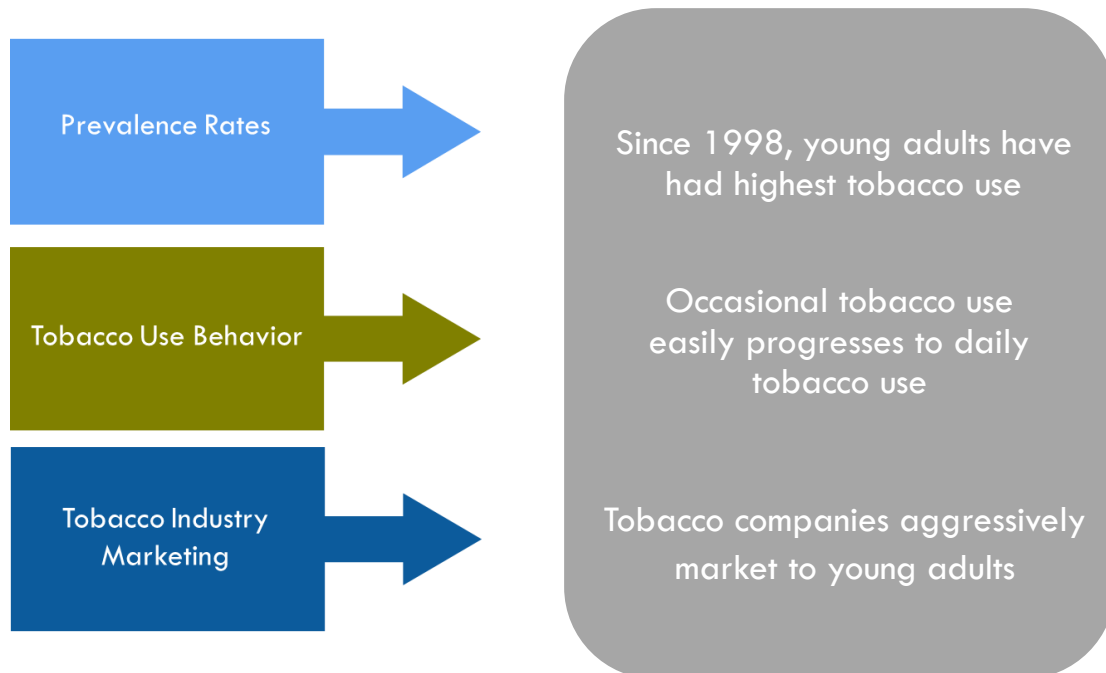


# Tobacco: Still a Problem on Minnesota Campuses

While the overall tobacco use rate continues to decrease and public spaces are becoming increasingly tobacco free, tobacco use and exposure remain a problem on college campuses.

- ◆ Among Minnesota adults aged 18-24, nearly 22% are current smokers—the highest among all age categories. The rate among all Minnesota adults is 19%.
- ◆ Many young adults start using tobacco while in college. Since the 1990s, smoking among young adults has been increasing.
- ◆ The tobacco industry continues to target young adults with advertising, promotions and new products, creating a cohort of new, life-long tobacco users.
- ◆ There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, yet students at one Minnesota university\* report that the primary place they are exposed to secondhand smoke is on campus (twice as often as they are exposed to secondhand smoke outside of bars and restaurants).
- ◆ Many college students consider themselves nonsmokers because they only use tobacco occasionally. However, progression from occasional to daily smoking almost always occurs by age 26.



\* 2012 University of Minnesota Student Opinion Survey on Tobacco Use and Exposure

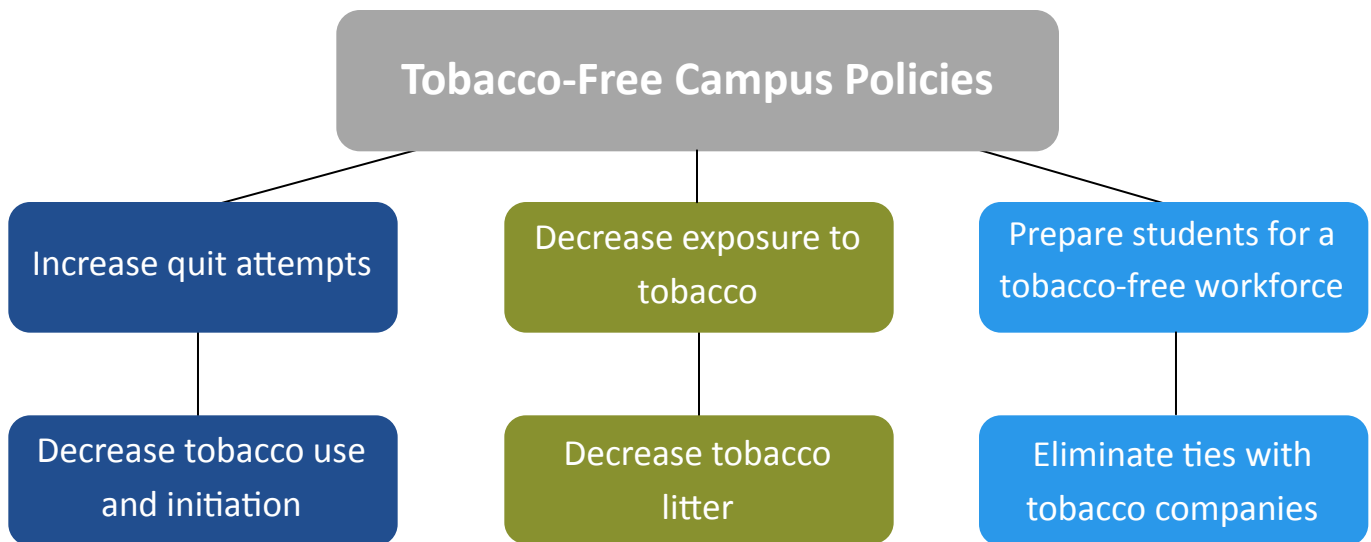
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This publication was made possible through funding from the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) of the Minnesota Department of Health.

# Tobacco-Free Campus Policies: A Proven Solution

Tobacco-free campus policies provide a healthier living, working and learning environment for students, faculty, staff and visitors.



- ◆ Tobacco-free campus policies are proven to increase quit attempts. In conjunction with a well-funded cessation program, creating a supportive, tobacco-free environment is key to helping tobacco-users quit.
- ◆ By establishing the social norm of non-tobacco use, policies help reduce the likelihood that a student will initiate tobacco use while on campus.
- ◆ These policies reduce exposure to harmful secondhand smoke. Policies protect the health of nonsmoking students—especially those with health conditions triggered by smoke.
- ◆ Policies reduce tobacco litter, creating a cleaner and “greener” environment for the campus and the surrounding community and decreasing maintenance costs.
- ◆ Tobacco-free policies help colleges fulfill their missions. An unhealthy campus with ties to the tobacco industry does not align with academic leadership and respected research.
- ◆ A tobacco-free campus prepares students for tobacco-free work environments. Many worksites are tobacco free and this trend continues to rise. Non-tobacco users will be better suited for today’s workforce.

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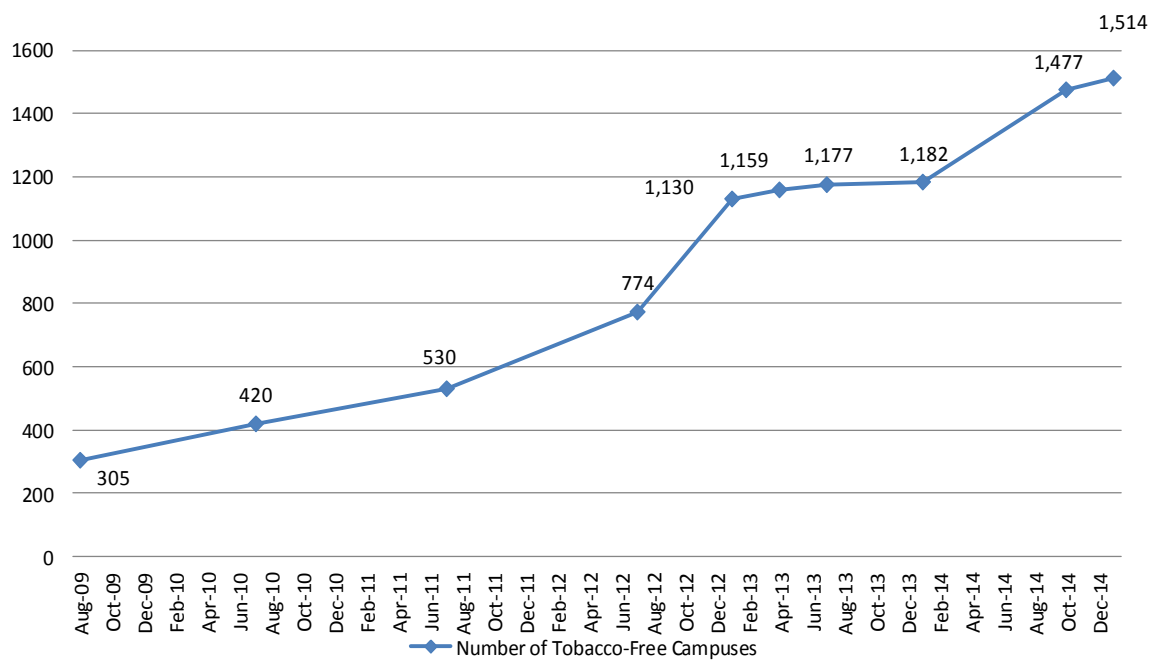
# Tobacco-Free Campuses: The New Norm

College leaders are realizing the important role they can play in reducing tobacco use and exposure among young adults. As a result, colleges in Minnesota and across the country are implementing tobacco-free policies for their campuses.

- ◆ More than 50 colleges and universities in Minnesota have adopted tobacco-free campus policies. These institutions range from 2-year technical schools to 4-year private colleges to public universities, in urban, rural and suburban communities.
- ◆ More than 1,500 colleges and universities in the nation are 100% smoke-free. Of those, more than 1,000 are completely tobacco-free. This number has increased rapidly since 2009.
- ◆ The American College Health Association recommends that all colleges and universities adopt a 100% tobacco-free policy.

## Tobacco-Free Campus Policy Trend

2009-2015



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# Tobacco-Free Campus Policies: FAQs

While there are proven positive impacts of tobacco-free campus policies, questions and concerns about the implications of adopting and implementing such a policy are common.

**Q: Don't tobacco-free campus policies infringe upon the rights of tobacco-users?**

A: There is no guaranteed "right" to use tobacco and tobacco users are not a protected class. Furthermore, colleges implement many other policies that concern student, faculty, staff and visitor behavior.

**Q: Why create a policy that eliminates all forms of tobacco? Why not implement a smoke-free policy instead, since smokeless tobacco only harms the user?**

A: The goal of tobacco-free campus policies is improving health outcomes for everyone. A tobacco-free policy promotes good health for ALL students, faculty and staff—smokers, chewers and those who live, work and learn near them.

**Q: Why not create designated areas, where people can still use tobacco without leaving campus?**

A: The goal of a comprehensive policy is to help people quit; allowing tobacco use anywhere on campus does not help meet this goal. Designated areas allow for continued exposure to secondhand smoke, since the areas are still part of the campus community; they can also be a big contributor of litter.

**Q: Won't a tobacco-free campus policy be difficult to enforce?**

A: Enforcement needs to be addressed in the policy language and with the campus community at large. A good policy has a plan for enforcement built in, including education, communication and cessation resources. Compliance with these policies is largely community driven since tobacco-free policies change the social norm around tobacco use. Thus, most campuses that have enacted policies have not experienced widespread enforcement problems.

**Q: What does a strong tobacco-free campus policy include?**

A: There are many existing models of successful tobacco-free campus policies. A strong policy includes definitions (e.g. tobacco products, nicotine products, etc.), detailed policy information (e.g. what locations the policy applies to), compliance language (e.g. who is responsible for ensuring compliance), enforcement language and cessation resources, including a state or national quit line. *(cont.)*

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# Tobacco-Free Campus Policies: FAQs

*(continued)*

**Q: Tobacco-free policies may work on other campuses, but our campus is different. We deal with unique issues that would make it difficult to enact a policy.**

A: Each campus is unique and therefore should address any anticipated issues in a well thought-out policy implementation process, led by a representative task force. By inviting a diverse group of people representing the many interests on campus to the table, a policy can be crafted that suits the unique needs of any campus.

**Q: Doesn't a tobacco-free campus create an unwelcoming environment for tobacco users, especially international students, faculty, staff and visitors?**

A: It is a misconception that international students use tobacco at a markedly higher rate than domestic students, or that they do not support tobacco-free policies. In fact, tobacco-free policies are prevalent worldwide, making it likely that international students, faculty, staff and visitors are already accustomed to such policies.

**Q: Do colleges that enact tobacco-free campus policies experience a drop in enrollment?**

A: Many colleges are using their tobacco-free policy as a recruiting tool for health-conscious students and their parents. There is no evidence that fewer students choose to apply to or enroll at a college with a tobacco-free campus.

**Q: Tobacco-free campus policies force students who use tobacco to leave campus to do so. Does this pose a safety risk, especially at night?**

A: No campus with a tobacco-free policy has reported any incidence of crime related to students leaving campus to use tobacco. While student safety is a concern on all campuses, colleges are already working to keep all students, faculty, staff and visitors as safe as possible at all times.

**Q: All colleges are concerned about their budgets. How much do tobacco-free campus policies cost?**

A: While there is some cost associated with implementation (signage, print materials, removing ash cans, etc.), as employers, colleges can expect to see a long term cost savings on their health insurance plans. Insurance claims for tobacco –related illnesses decrease as more employees quit tobacco because they work in a supportive, tobacco-free environment.

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HEALTH REFORM

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# Steps for Adopting a Tobacco-Free Campus Policy

It is important to follow the necessary steps for successful implementation of a tobacco-free campus policy.

## Steps for passing a tobacco-free campus policy

- ☐ Complete a tobacco-free campus opinion survey
- ☐ Complete a tobacco-free environmental assessment
- ☐ Convene a monthly committee
- ☐ Develop an action plan based on assessment findings, which identifies short- and long-term goals
- ☐ Develop a draft policy statement and share with institution stakeholders
- ☐ Adopt and communicate the tobacco-free policy
- ☐ Offer tobacco cessation resources to students, staff, and faculty
- ☐ Improve the campus environment by removing cigarette receptacles and posting policy signage
- ☐ Monitor compliance with the tobacco-free campus policy



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