



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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**HAWAII YOUTH KICK BUTTS AS SMOKING RATES
CONTINUE TO DECLINE**

Honolulu – Today, as Hawaii youth around the state celebrate Kick Butts Day, the Hawaii State Department of Health and Department of Education commend our students for a significant decline in smoking among young people in Hawaii's public middle schools (grades 6-8) and high schools (grades 9-12). Initial findings from the 2005 Hawaii School Health Survey's Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) show fewer youth identifying themselves as current smokers, fewer youth experimenting with cigarettes and fewer youth being exposed to second-hand smoke. A fact sheet with a graph is attached.

Health Director Chiyome Fukino, M.D. said, "I'm very proud that more and more of our Hawaii youth are making the decision not to smoke. After the dramatic reductions in youth smoking from the 2003 YTS data, we are really pleased to see that our progress continues. The data demonstrates that a comprehensive prevention and control program can make a positive difference for our youth. When we started collecting data on youth smoking in 1993, youth smoking rates were 28.2%, now they are less than half that number."

The survey results are important as we celebrate Kick Butts Day in Hawaii and throughout the nation. Today, youth throughout the state will be participating in events to prevent their peers from starting to use tobacco and to encourage others to join in the fight against tobacco use. Youth will share their anti-tobacco message in schools and will be picking up cigarette butts, a major source of litter in Hawaii.

"Youth education is especially important because we know from experience, people are more likely to become life long smokers if they pick up the habit as youth," explained Fukino. "Today's youth are more

(more)

educated on the harmful effects of smoking. Survey results show nine out of ten middle and high school students know that smoke from other people's cigarettes is harmful to them."

The Department of Health, along with the Coalition for a Tobacco Free Hawaii, and the Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund are also launching the Five-Year Strategic Plan for Tobacco Use Prevention and Control in Hawaii tonight at a reception at Washington Place. Some 250 individuals from communities and organizations across the state helped shape this plan which defines the goals and priority strategies designed to further reduce tobacco use in the state over the next five years. The strategic plan will be available online at www.tobaccofreehawaii.org.

Program initiatives over the past decade that have built the state's comprehensive approach to tobacco control include, increases in the price of cigarettes, the creation and enforcement of laws preventing youth access to tobacco products, the adoption of smoke free indoor air laws and policies on school campuses and in workplaces, conducting an aggressive youth focused anti-tobacco media and counter-marketing campaign, improvements in school curriculum, enhanced data collection, surveillance and program evaluation, and the implementation of a smoking cessation Quitline.

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TOBACCO FACT SHEET

The Hawaii School Health Survey is a bi-annual survey administered by the Departments of Health and Education to public school students in grades 6-12. In all, 1,676 students from 23 schools participated in the middle school survey and 1,551 students from 23 schools participated in the high school survey. The survey results are weighted to be representative of the public school population in Hawaii.

Results from the survey, conducted in the fall of 2005, revealed that:

- **Fewer young people are experimenting with cigarettes**, a 20% decrease (from 2000) in the number of high school students who have ever tried cigarettes. In 2005, only 43.5% of high school and 20.1% of middle school students had experimented with cigarettes.
- **Fewer young people report being current smokers**, 12.6% of high school students and 4.9% of middle school students are current smokers (those who have smoked on at least one of the past 30 days.)
- **Fewer young people are being exposed to secondhand smoke (SHS)**, the proportion of students who have been exposed to SHS in the past week has decreased to 56.4% of high school students (68% in 2000) and 39.6% of middle schoolers (53.7% in 2000).

Prevalence of selected tobacco indicators by school type, Hawaii YTS 2000, 2003 and 2005						
Tobacco Indicator	Middle School			High School		
	2000 HI %	2003 HI %	2005 HI %	2000 HI %	2003 HI %	2005 HI %
Ever smoked cigarettes (even one or two puffs)	38.4	21.1	20.1	63.3	47.8	43.5
Currently smoke cigarettes	12.9	5.3	4.9	24.5	14.9	12.6
Believe secondhand smoke is harmful to them	89.3	86.5	88.4	91.7	90.4	93.8
Were exposed in SHS in a room in past week	53.7	40.0	39.6	68.0	57.6	56.4

**Current Smoking Prevalence Among Hawaii Youth,
 HYTS 2000-2003**

