



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO M.D.
DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-4410
Fax: (808) 586-4444

For Immediate Release: February 27, 2009

09-012

FEWER ADULTS SMOKING IN HAWAII

HONOLULU – The Department of Health (DOH) today announced a drop in the number of adults in Hawai'i that report smoking, from 17 percent in 2007 to 15.4 percent in 2008, making Hawai'i's smoking prevalence one of the lowest in the country. The 1.6 percent decline translates to approximately 14,000 fewer smokers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the national average for adult smoking is 20 percent.

Lt. Governor James R. "Duke" Aiona, Jr. discussed the decrease in smoking during an anti-tobacco event led by the Coalition for a Tobacco Free Hawai'i today at the State Capitol. Governor Linda Lingle and Lt. Governor Aiona proclaimed Feb. 27 as "Kick Butts Day" in Hawai'i.

"The people of Hawai'i are increasingly making the right decision not to smoke," said Lt. Governor Aiona. "Our research shows that our comprehensive and collaborative approach to combat tobacco use is paying off."

Since the survey began collecting data in 1986, there has been a steady decline in the smoking rates among Hawai'i adults. In 1986, the prevalence rate for smoking was 26.1 percent. This decline represents both a substantial reduction in the number of smokers in the state as well as a decline in the costs associated with treating tobacco-related diseases.

These new numbers for adults complement the recently released prevalence rates for youth. The 2007 Youth Tobacco Survey conducted in Hawai'i's public high and middle schools revealed that smoking rates declined to 9.7 percent for high school students and 4.2 percent for middle school students.

“These figures represent a significant measure of success on the return of our investment in tobacco control,” said Health Director Chiyome Fukino, M.D. “In addition to having close to 14,000 fewer smokers in Hawai‘i, the decline impacts other chronic diseases, such as asthma, heart disease and diabetes where smoking is a major risk factor.”

Hawai‘i continues its commitment to investing in a comprehensive, well funded, and sustained tobacco effort to address the single most preventable cause of death and disease in Hawai‘i and the rest of the nation. The Department credits the ability of a broad variety of tobacco control advocates and community and agency partners, working in collaboration to achieve strategically planned objectives. For more information on the DOH Tobacco Prevention and Education Program visit www.hawaii.gov/health.

###

Attachment: Kick Butts Day Proclamation

For more information contact:

Julian Lipsher, MPH, Program Manager
Department of Health, Tobacco Prevention &
Education Program
Phone: (808) 586-4662
E-mail: julian.lipsher@doh.hawaii.gov

Janice Okubo, Public Information Officer
Department of Health, Communications
Phone: (808) 586-4442
E-mail: janice.okubo@doh.hawaii.gov