

Reducing Tobacco Use

A Report of the Surgeon General

Executive Summary



Department of Health and Human Services

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a publication.

Publications have not been scanned in their entirety for the purpose of digitization. To see the full publication please search online or visit the Clinton Presidential Library's Research Room.



B

Assistant Secretary for Health
Surgeon General
Washington, D.C. 20201
August 25, 2000

Dear Colleague:

Enclosed is a copy of the Surgeon General's Report, *Reducing Tobacco Use*, which was released on August 9. This is the first Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health to offer a composite review of the various methods used to reduce and prevent tobacco use. The topic is a new one in the Report series, although previous reports have examined aspects of such strategies.

In addition to a historical sketch of tobacco control activity in the United States, this Report provides an overview of the major methods—educational, clinical, regulatory, economic, and comprehensive—that have been studied to reduce and prevent tobacco use. The Report attempts, where possible, to differentiate techniques and outcomes of these methods and provide qualitative observations about how these efforts interact. The Report is, therefore, a prologue to the development of a coherent, long-term tobacco policy that will permit these methods to be used as effectively as possible.

The six major conclusions of the report are as follows:

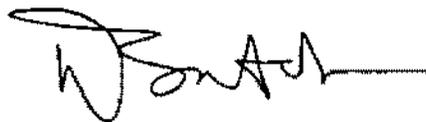
1. Efforts to prevent the onset or continuance of tobacco use face the pervasive, countervailing influence of tobacco promotion by the tobacco industry, a promotion that takes place despite overwhelming evidence of adverse health effects from tobacco use.
2. The available approaches to reducing tobacco use—educational, clinical, regulatory, economic, and comprehensive—differ substantially in their techniques and in the metric by which success can be measured. A hierarchy of effectiveness is difficult to construct.
3. Approaches with the largest span of impact (economic, regulatory, and comprehensive) are likely to have the greatest long-term, population impact. Those with a smaller span of impact (educational and clinical) are of greater importance in helping individuals resist or abandon the use of tobacco.
4. Each of the modalities reviewed provides evidence of effectiveness:
 - Educational strategies, conducted in conjunction with community- and media-based activities, can postpone or prevent smoking onset in 20 to 40 percent of adolescents.

- Pharmacologic treatment of nicotine addiction, combined with behavioral support, will enable 20 to 25 percent of users to remain abstinent at one year posttreatment. Even less intense measures, such as physicians advising their patients to quit smoking, can produce cessation proportions of 5 to 10 percent.
 - Regulation of advertising and promotion, particularly that directed at young people, is very likely to reduce both prevalence and uptake of smoking.
 - Clean air regulations and restriction of minors' access to tobacco products contribute to a changing social norm with regard to smoking and may influence prevalence directly.
 - An optimal level of excise taxation on tobacco products will reduce the prevalence of smoking, the consumption of tobacco, and the long-term health consequences of tobacco use.
5. The impact of these various efforts, as measured with a variety of techniques, is likely to be underestimated because of the synergistic effect of these modalities. The potential for combined effects underscores the need for comprehensive approaches.
6. State tobacco control programs, funded by excise taxes on tobacco products and settlements with the tobacco industry, have produced early, encouraging evidence of the efficacy of the comprehensive approach to reducing tobacco use.

In addition to the full report, enclosed are the copies of the Executive Summary and the consumer-oriented *At A Glance*. You may request additional copies of these two publications from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Office on Smoking and Health, at telephone (770) 488-5705. Additional copies of the full report (S/N 017-001-00544-4) may be purchased from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402-9328, (202) 512-1800. Copies of the full report, Executive Summary, and *At A Glance* may also be downloaded from CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>.

I hope this information is useful.

Sincerely,



David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D.
Assistant Secretary for Health and
Surgeon General

Enclosures

Reducing Tobacco Use

A Report of the Surgeon General



Department of Health and Human Services

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

This is not a presidential record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

This marker identifies the place of a publication.

Publications have not been scanned in their entirety for the purpose of digitization. To see the full publication please search online or visit the Clinton Presidential Library's Research Room.