



# Clinton County Health Department

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***“Working Together for a Healthier Community”***

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**Clinton County Health Department  
Press Release  
Reaching Local Communities – Improving Health  
Tobacco Control Leaders Travel To Albany  
January 23, 2012**

Tobacco use continues to inflict a terrible toll on New York State residents, especially the poor. That is the message that state tobacco control leaders, bring to Albany on January 24, to educate state lawmakers about proven programs, many funded by the State, that are now in place to reduce the burden caused by tobacco and to save lives and state tax dollars.

New York State legislators are invited to visit the Well of the Legislative Office Building where local program representatives will be joined by volunteer youth advocates to answer questions, offer resources and give demonstrations about effective tobacco prevention programs being delivered across the state.

“Tobacco control leaders live and work in the communities they serve. They coordinate with community members, allied health partners and neighborhood organizations to provide community level programs that reach disadvantaged urban neighborhoods and underserved rural areas,” said Jill Rock, Senior Public Health Educator for the Adirondack Tobacco Free Network. “The working poor and minorities are among the hardest hit by tobacco use. Tobacco control programs help those who need it most.”

“We don’t want youth smoking rates to just decline, we want to see them plummet,” said Irwin Berlin, MD, board chair of the American Lung Association in New York. “Imagine how many more young people could be saved from tobacco addiction if New York State’s funding were to be increased. New York State’s tobacco control program is adept at reducing adult and youth smoking rates. By implementing local initiatives that change community norms and shedding light on how the tobacco industry’s marketing is designed to encourage youth smoking, this program is not only changing perceptions, it is driving changes in behavior. The cessation services being offered are helping smokers to stop using tobacco.”

New York State has raised over \$10.5 billion in tobacco revenues over the past six years, yet funding for the tobacco control never approached the levels recommended by experts at the U.S. Centers for Disease Prevention and Control. Over the past three years, the New York State Department of Health’s Tobacco Control Program (NYTCP) budget has been cut in half. In the current fiscal year, New York will spend a mere two cents of every dollar it receives in tobacco revenue on tobacco control. Last week, Governor Cuomo proposed a further \$5 million cut in the program’s budget.

“Tobacco control programs are life-saving initiatives. Much has been done to curb tobacco use but much more remains to be done before the staggering toll of tobacco use on our families and communities is reduced,” said Russ Sciandra, New York State Director for Advocacy of the American Cancer Society.



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“We especially need to bring more resources to poor urban and rural communities across the state. The cost of tobacco and the burden of tobacco-caused disease increasingly falls on those least able to bear it.”

In Clinton County, the current adult smoking rate is 21.7%.\* In 2010, 2,330,000 (15.5 percent) adults were smokers in New York State. Since 2000, adult smoking has fallen 28 percent in the overall population, but is unchanged among those with the lowest incomes, a group that now has the highest smoking rate.

In New York State, more than 25,400 lives are lost due to tobacco use annually. Tobacco costs New Yorkers an estimated \$8.17 billion on annual health care expenditures, including \$2.7 billion in state and local Medicaid costs.

The New York State Tobacco Control Program (NYTCP) implements evidence-based and promising strategies to prevent and reduce tobacco use. The NYTCP envisions a tobacco-free society for all New Yorkers.

\*Note: Adult rates of smoking by county can be found at:

[http://www.health.ny.gov/press/releases/2010/2010-07-28\\_tobacco\\_media\\_event.htm#county\\_rates](http://www.health.ny.gov/press/releases/2010/2010-07-28_tobacco_media_event.htm#county_rates)

Endorsed By: \_\_\_\_\_

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