

# It's time to *CLEAR THE AIR* in the North Country

The percentage of adult smokers in the North Country exceeds the national and New York State percentages.

The importance of preventing tobacco use is made clear through the long-standing high prevalence of tobacco use in the North Country.

-  Approximately **96%** of smokers begin smoking before the age of **21**
-  Smokers frequently transition from experimentation to addiction between the ages of 18 and 21
-  The younger the age of initiation, the greater the risk of nicotine addiction, heavy daily smoking, and difficulty quitting



## Get Involved

The North Country Population Health Improvement Program (NC PHIP) - managed by AHI and supported by a grant from the NYS Department of Health - is working with organizations and individuals in the North Country to promote actions to reduce tobacco use in the North Country.

If the smoking rates remain on their current course, more than 13,200 children presently under the age of 18 in the North Country will be smokers as adults.

## How do we change the statistics?

Raising the minimum legal sale age of tobacco products to 21 years of age would decrease tobacco use by 12%; resulting in approximately 223,000 fewer premature deaths nationwide.

New York City, Albany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Cortland, Orange, Schenectady, and Suffolk counties have increased the minimum legal sale age of tobacco products to 21.





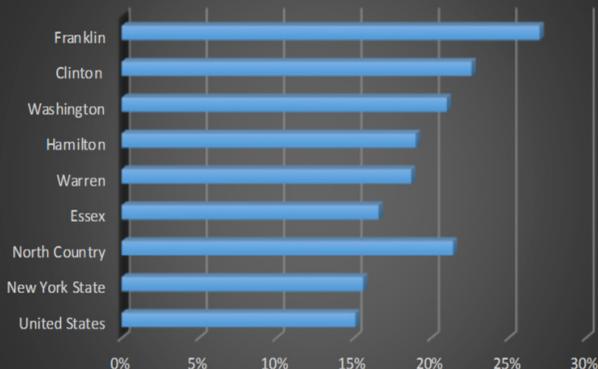
Smoking is the primary cause of preventable death in New York State; claiming between **26,000** and **28,200** lives annually.

In NYS, **68%** of adults and **60%** of adult smokers who were surveyed **support** raising the minimum legal sale age to **21**

## The Costs are HIGH

Tobacco use impacts health, quality of life, health care costs, and productivity:

- Three of the top five leading causes of premature death in the North Country are cancer, heart disease and chronic lower respiratory diseases – all closely associated with tobacco use. Between 2012 and 2014, these causes of death resulted in a total of 2,039 premature deaths in the North Country.
- The incidence rates for lung and bronchus cancer, and lip, oral cavity and pharynx cancer in the North Country exceed the rates for all of New York State.
- The annual health care expenditures directly caused by tobacco use in NYS is \$8.17 billion; the annual NYS Medicaid program's total health expenditures caused by tobacco use is \$5.47 billion.
- NYS businesses lose approximately \$3,734 each year for each employee who smokes - \$1,791 in lost productivity and \$1,943 in excess medical expenditures.



Tobacco use is one of the most important health threats to *children, adolescents, and adults.*

Over the past 10 years, the prevalence of adult cigarette smoking has decreased significantly in the United States and New York State. However, the percentage of adult cigarette smokers in the North Country remains high.

For more information about how to get involved, please email [phip@ahihealth.org](mailto:phip@ahihealth.org)

Updates on efforts to reduce tobacco use in the North Country can be found on the HealthyADK website: <http://www.healthyadk.org/>