



Adirondack Health Institute

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**North Country Population Health Improvement Program  
Stakeholder Meeting  
March 6, 2017  
Lake George, NY**

**Meeting Summary**

**Introduction**

The purpose of the meeting was to learn about current tobacco-control activities occurring in the region and organize a regional initiative to reduce tobacco use in the North Country.

The expected outcome of the meeting was the creation of a task force to develop and guide a regional approach to reducing tobacco use in the North Country. The task force's *initial* focus will be on:

- ✓ Educating the region about the impact of tobacco use on the health of North Country residents and communities; and
- ✓ Mobilizing stakeholders to advocate for raising the minimum legal sale age for tobacco products to 21 years of age in each county in the North Country.

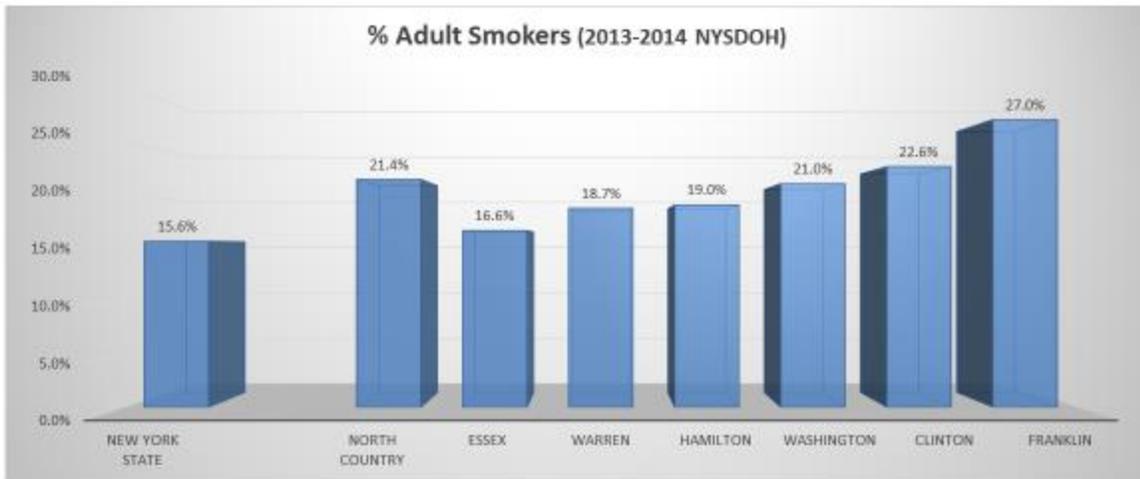
**Overview of Tobacco Use in the North Country**

The data depicted below was presented to illustrate the high prevalence of cigarette smoking among adults and young adults in the North Country.

The fact that, as a region and for each county within the region, North Country adults smoke cigarettes at a higher prevalence than all New Yorkers highlights the need to design a regional approach to reducing tobacco use in the North Country. The very high prevalence of cigarette smoking among young adults in the North Country confirms the need to construct and promote a comprehensive and multi-dimensional regional strategy designed to prevent the initiation of tobacco use by young people. One key component of the strategy includes increasing the minimum legal sale age for tobacco products to 21 years of age in each North Country county (Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Warren and Washington).



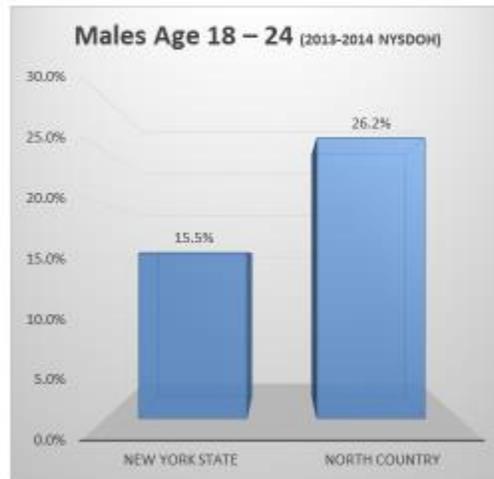
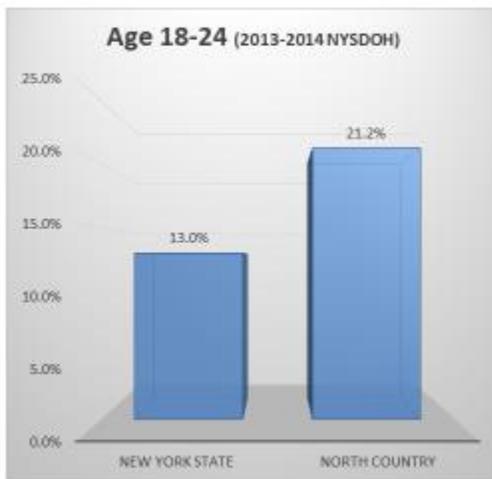
## Adult Smokers in the North Country



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## Young Adult Smokers in the North Country



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## Overview of Tobacco Use Reduction Programs and Activities in the North Country

Representatives from the New York State Department of Health-funded Advancing Tobacco-Free Communities programs (listed below) described the tobacco-use reduction activities they conduct and the services they provide throughout the region.

- ✓ Health Promotion Center, Glens Falls Hospital (subcontract with North Country Healthy Heart Network)
- ✓ Champlain Valley Family Center
- ✓ Catholic Charities of Fulton and Montgomery Counties

These programs work to change the community environment to support a tobacco-free norm by:

- ✓ Reducing the negative impact of tobacco product marketing and price promotions on youth and adults at the point of sale;
- ✓ Increasing the number of local laws and voluntary policies that prohibit tobacco use in outdoor areas;
- ✓ Decreasing secondhand smoke exposure in multi-unit housing, with an emphasis on policies that protect the health of residents;
- ✓ Promoting policies that reduce tobacco use imagery in movies, and on the Internet and social media;
- ✓ Training and supporting young people – Reality Check – to assist programs achieve their goals; and
- ✓ Assisting health care practices to increase routine screening of patients' tobacco use and referral to appropriate cessation services and supplies.

## North Country PHIP's Support of a North Country Tobacco Use Reduction Task Force

The North Country PHIP intends to support a regional tobacco use reduction initiative by:

- ✓ Hiring an Outreach Specialist to assist in coordinating and advancing Task Force activities;
- ✓ Organizing and convening regional Task Force and county-specific meetings;
- ✓ Documenting Task Force activities and progress;
- ✓ Creating regional and county-specific education materials;
- ✓ Utilizing *HealthyADK* website to host all Task Force materials and communicate updates on Task Force activities and progress; and
- ✓ Convening training workshops and learning collaboratives to promote the implementation of effective tobacco use reduction strategies and interventions.

Materials developed to-date by the North Country PHIP to support the regional initiative include:

- ✓ Regional Report and County Profiles on data associated with cigarette smoking;
- ✓ Community education and "Call to Action" document (*It's Time to Clear the Air in the North Country*);
- ✓ Statement of Support from organizations in the region (DSRIP Performing Provider System partners will be encouraged to provide Statements of Support);
- ✓ On-line petition for individuals to "voice" support for raising the minimum sale age for tobacco products;
- ✓ Sample editorials/letters-to-the-editor for use by organizations/individuals throughout the region;
- ✓ Information on minimum legal sale age policies from other NYS counties; and
- ✓ Data infographics that depict the impact of tobacco use on the region and individual counties (e.g. infographic on the percent of Medicaid beneficiaries in each county who received treatment for COPD).

## Communications Plan

Communications staff from AHI presented the plan that will be used to promote awareness and advance the goals of the regional initiative. The communications plan includes:

- ✓ Developing a range of educational materials and infographics targeting specific audiences and topics;
- ✓ Using “earned” media such as press releases, editorials, public service announcements, and letters to the editor;
- ✓ Marketing through websites - HealthyADK, AHI and partners websites – using such methods as web pages, banners, blogs, news feeds and links;
- ✓ Creating a tool box of education materials that will be accessed on the home page of HealthyADK; and
- ✓ Using social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn).

### Join the Conversation

**@ahi\_health**

**#cleartheairadk**

## Discussion

The discussion among meeting participants (see attached list) demonstrated a strong interest and commitment to organizing a regional tobacco use reduction initiative. Representatives from the American Cancer Society and American Lung Association of the Northeast offered insight into state and other local efforts to increase the minimum legal sale age for tobacco products and discussed resources that are available to assist in a North Country regional initiative. A representative from the March of Dimes was unable to attend the meeting, but expressed support for the regional initiative.

In addition to promoting awareness about the benefits of, and need for, raising the minimum legal sale of age tobacco products throughout the North Country, additional Task Force objectives were identified including:

- ✓ Increasing the availability of tobacco cessation services throughout the region;
- ✓ Expanding tobacco use screening services beyond the health care/primary care setting;
- ✓ Encouraging community-based organizations in the region to address tobacco use and refer clients to tobacco use cessation services;
- ✓ Building the capacity of tobacco use cessation specialists to provide effective interventions;
- ✓ Working with businesses on promoting tobacco use reduction programs in the workplace;
- ✓ Integrating tobacco use cessation services into behavioral health program services;
- ✓ Creating more options to help young people quit their tobacco use; and
- ✓ Sponsoring training workshops and learning collaboratives on such topics as medication assisted treatment and motivational interviewing.

Meeting participants suggested that representatives from the following sectors should be encouraged to join the Task Force:

Health care providers/clinicians  
Health insurance plans (public and private)  
Clergy members  
YMCAs  
Addiction recovery groups  
School districts  
Community colleges, colleges and universities

Youth groups  
Veteran groups  
Chambers of Commerce  
Housing authorities  
Park and recreation departments  
St. Regis Mohawk health services  
Programs for people with disabilities

## **Next Steps**

The next meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for **Monday, March 27, 2017 in Lake Placid** (see information below).

Prior to the meeting, PHIP will attempt to gather information about the experiences from other counties that have raised the minimum legal sale age for tobacco products to 21 years including impact on tax revenue, enforcement issues, opposition to the age increase and effective messaging.

Also prior to the meeting, PHIP will commence the communications plan and start to disseminate information about the Task Force and its focus on raising the sale age in the North Country.

The agenda for the March 27<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting will include the following items:

- ✓ Update on the communication/regional education plan;
- ✓ Discussion about how to assess each county's readiness to raise the minimum legal sale age;
- ✓ Creation of a roadmap to guide the Task Force's activities and anticipated outcomes; and
- ✓ Determination of timeline for establishing work groups in each of the 6 counties in the region.

Please send comments/questions about the meeting summary to:

[phip@ahihealth.org](mailto:phip@ahihealth.org)

## **Next Meeting**

**March 27, 2017**

**10:00 a.m. to Noon (continental breakfast at 9:30 a.m.)**

**Golden Arrow Lakeside Resort  
2559 Main Street  
Lake Placid, NY**