

## Teen Smoking

### DEFINITION

This indicator reports the percentage of students in grades 9 through 12 who say they have used cigarettes at least once in the last 30 days.

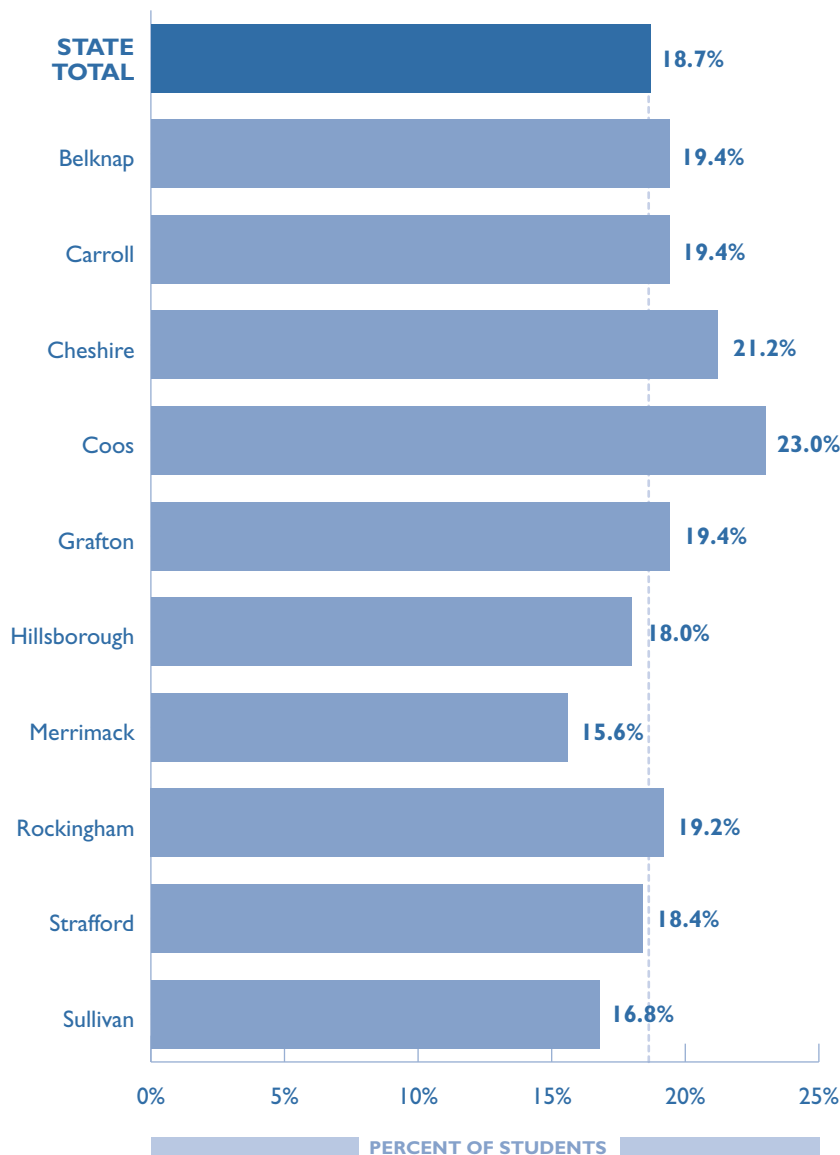
### CONTEXT

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable premature death in the United States. Cigarette smoking is responsible for 30 percent of all cancer deaths and 20 percent of all deaths due to cardiovascular disease (Kenyon 2003, 803).

Most adult smokers began smoking before 18 years of age, so halting teen smoking is important for a person's lifetime health. Between 1997 and 2003, the rate of teen smoking across the United States dropped dramatically, from 36 to 22 percent. Since then progress in reducing teen smoking has slowed (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2010)

One way to reduce smoking is to raise the price of cigarettes, either directly or through raising cigarette taxes. Teens are more responsive to increased cigarette prices than are adults (Kenyon 2003, 803). Another way to reduce smoking is to use prevention programs, however New Hampshire has not allocated state budget dollars to prevention programs since 2003 (New Hampshire Institute for Health Policy and Practice 2006).

### Students Who Smoked Cigarettes in the Past 30 Days By County, 2009



## NEW HAMPSHIRE FINDINGS

In 2009, 18.7 percent of New Hampshire high school students reported smoking one or more cigarettes in the last 30 days. This rate varies across the state, with the lowest reported rate of 15.6 percent in Merrimack County, and the highest reported rate of 23 percent in the Coos County. (see chart on previous page)

When tobacco use is defined more broadly, a higher percentage of New Hampshire high school students are found to use tobacco. In 2009, 28.9 percent of New Hampshire high school students smoked cigarettes or cigars or used chewing tobacco, snuff or dip on one or more of the past 30 days (New Hampshire Department of Education 2009a), a rise from 25.8 percent in 2003. Specifically, the percentage of students who used chewing tobacco, snuff or dip increased from 4.3 percent in 2003 to 8.4 percent in 2009.

## SOURCE OF DATA FOR ILLUSTRATION/METHODOLOGY

New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). 2011. Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services, Division of Community Based Care Services,

In the spring of 2009, 1,493 students in 53 New Hampshire public high schools completed the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The school response rate was 78 percent and the student rate 83 percent. Some students are not in school on the day of the survey and because those students may have a different risk profile than the general school population, this may bias results slightly. Also, students may not respond truthfully or carefully to surveys or may be influenced by peer pressure in their survey responses (Oyster River 2007, ii).

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services provided survey results by high school. The following methodology was used to estimate usage rates by county. First, each school that participated in the survey was identified by county. County-level rates were computed using a weighted average of school-level rates based on enrollment. Special estimates were computed for schools with students from more than one county (see methodology in Appendix).

## REFERENCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2010. Vital Signs. September 7. [www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/tobaccouse/smoking/LatestFindings.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/tobaccouse/smoking/LatestFindings.html).

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New Hampshire Department of Education. 2009a. *2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results*.

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Oyster River: *New Hampshire Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Community Level Report, 2007*. [www.ci.durham.nh.us/generalpdfs/YRBS.pdf](http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/generalpdfs/YRBS.pdf).