

Tobacco Use

Objective: *Reduce cigarette smoking to a prevalence of no more than 15% among people aged 18 and older.*

Tobacco use is the most important single preventable cause of death in the United States, accounting for an estimated 500,000 lost lives per year - more than alcohol, cocaine, heroin, homicide, suicide, car accidents, fires, and AIDS *combined*. It is a major risk factor for diseases of the heart and blood vessels; chronic bronchitis and emphysema; cancers of the lung, larynx, pharynx, oral cavity, esophagus, pancreas, and bladder; and other problems such as respiratory infections and stomach ulcers. Direct medical costs attributable to smoking in Virginia in 1993 were estimated to be \$829 million. Despite these staggering numbers and an increasing public awareness of the health consequences of tobacco use, an estimated 22% of the Commonwealth's citizens aged 18 and older still smoke. Cutting that number by roughly one-third by the turn of the century is the challenge we face.

