

SURVEILLANCE UPDATE

North Carolina Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch -- March 2010



2009 N.C. Youth Tobacco Survey: African American Youth

North Carolina has approximately 444,870 African American students in its public schools, which represents 31.2% of the total population of students. That number is 31.2% higher than the total percentage of African Americans in the state (21.7%). The percentages of African American students throughout North Carolina's 115 school districts vary widely from over 96% in Weldon City school to less than 1% in Mitchell County schools. The districts with higher percentages of African Americans tend to be located in the eastern North Carolina and those with lower percentages tend to be located in the western part of the state.¹

Tobacco Use Among African American Youth

Current use of any tobacco products among African American high school students is 21.8%, according to the 2009 Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS), a survey conducted every two years by the Division of Public Health. (Figure 1) The YTS also found that 11.6% of African American high schoolers and 3.8% of African American middle schoolers were current smokers.

Figure 1. Current Tobacco Use Among African American High School Students, YTS 2009

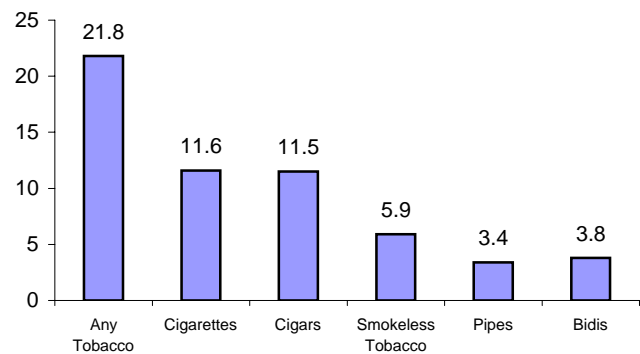
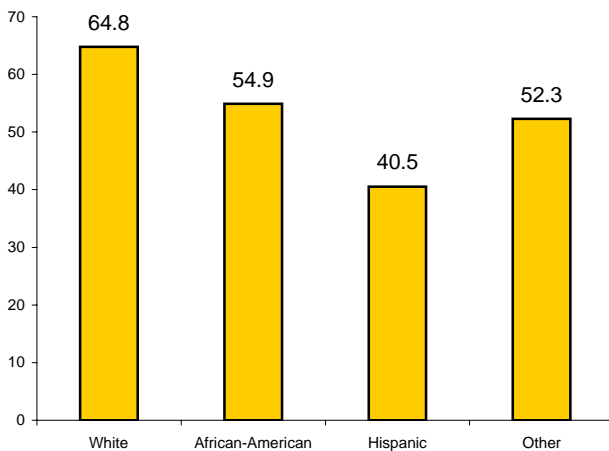


Figure 2. Percentage of High School Students Exposed to Secondhand Smoke in the Past 7 Days, YTS 2009



Secondhand Smoke – Are African American Youth Protected?

According to the 2009 YTS, 54.9% of high school African American youth were exposed to secondhand smoke in the past seven days (Figure 2). Much more needs to be done to protect African American youth from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke, which is the smoke coming from the burning end of a cigarette or exhaled from the lungs of a smoker. Secondhand smoke has been linked to life-threatening heart or asthma attacks and to long-term serious health conditions such as cancers, heart disease and lung diseases.

In North Carolina the Health and Wellness Trust Fund is supporting efforts to educate and protect African American youth from further harm. To learn more about these efforts go to www.healthwellnc.com.

For more information on the NC Youth Tobacco Survey (YTS) contact NC Tobacco Prevention and Control: 919-707-5400

1. NC Department of Public Instruction- www.ncpublicschools.org

