

## Youth and Tobacco Industry Tactics

In the past 20 years, cigarette use among Massachusetts youth has declined by more than 60%. The latest figures from 2011 show that cigarette smoking among Massachusetts high school students has decreased to 14%—the lowest level ever recorded—and well below the Healthy People 2020 national goal of 16%.

Yet over 90% of adult smokers started before they were eighteen years old and each year 4,700 youth in Massachusetts become new daily smokers.

Preventing young people from starting to use tobacco products will protect another generation from a lifetime of addiction. Our efforts are no longer focused on cigarettes alone. As youth smoking rates have declined due to limited access and higher prices, the tobacco industry has responded with new products.

Many of the little cigars and other tobacco products (OTP) like dissolvables and snus that we see in stores now are designed to attract young people. They are sold in colorful and fun packaging that appeals to young people, priced cheaply to encourage impulse buys, and available at a variety of locations, including gas stations to convenience stores, and pharmacies. These new products are largely exempt from current regulations that apply to traditional tobacco products such as cigarettes and cigars.

The rate of tobacco product use other than cigarettes was 16.8% among high school students in 2011. That is higher than the rate of cigarette use. Read more in our [Youth Tobacco Use in Massachusetts Survey Results Report](#).

### **Young people are a leading voice in preventing other young people from using tobacco products.**

84% of Massachusetts youth don't smoke, and many are working to combat big tobacco's influence on their communities. The 84 is a youth-led movement fighting for a tobacco-free generation, made up of chapters from all over the state. The 84 chapters are active in cities, towns, schools, and community organizations. Visit [the84.org](http://the84.org) for more information about the movement against the industry led by youth for youth.

Young people who are hooked on tobacco today face a lifetime of addiction. Nearly all adult smokers started before they were 18. Because their bodies and brains are still developing, young people are especially vulnerable to nicotine addiction. Tobacco use changes the pathways of the brain and interferes with normal development.

MTCP, with youth and community leaders are combating big tobacco's underhanded tactics to hook young people in Massachusetts by passing local regulations and other policies to decrease the impact of tobacco marketing on young people. The most effective policies [increase the price of tobacco](#), limit its availability, and decrease youth's exposure to tobacco packaging and other tobacco marketing.

**For Retailers:**

- Under 27: Show I.D, Under 18: No Sale materials and training guide reminding tobacco retailers to ask for a photo I.D.

**For Schools:**

- [School health resources](#) for educators and school administrators addressing broad school health issues of physical activity, healthy eating, and tobacco use prevention.
- More resources for schools about smoke-free laws