

# Dept. of Health Services: Cigarette smoking rates are lower since passage of Wisconsin's Smoke-Free Indoor Air Law

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Cigarette smoking rates have dropped since Wisconsin's Smoke-Free Indoor Air Law went into effect 10 years ago. In 2008, before the law passed, 20% of Wisconsin adults smoked cigarettes. By 2018, the rate had dropped to 16%. High school youth cigarette smoking rates dropped from nearly 21% in 2008 to nearly 5% in 2018. State cigarette taxes were also increased during this time period and contribute to this reduction.

"Wisconsin is breathing easier today thanks to this law, but we know there are many people in our state who still smoke," said DHS Secretary-Designee Andrea Palm. "We urge smokers to take advantage of the [programs available to help them to quit](#), especially now during the COVID-19 pandemic, as people who smoke are believed to be more susceptible to the virus, and can become severely ill with it."

Sunday, July 5, is the 10th anniversary of Wisconsin's smoke-free law. The law prohibits smoking in enclosed public spaces and has protected Wisconsinites from the hazards of secondhand smoke. Many communities have local ordinances that also prohibit the use of e-cigarettes and vaping devices in restaurants and bars, protecting an estimated 2 million Wisconsin residents, about 36% of the state's population, from secondhand smoke. Nearly 5% of Wisconsin adults currently use e-cigarettes, and nearly 22% of Wisconsin adults have used them.

Despite the law's exemption for casinos, several Wisconsin tribes have moved toward a smoke-free environment in their casinos, and more are now doing so in

light of COVID-19. Wisconsin residents are strongly encouraged to continue observing physical distancing practices and to wear masks to prevent transmission of COVID-19 if they visit local restaurants, bars, or casinos.

DHS is committed to helping Wisconsin residents who use tobacco and want to quit, including communities disproportionately affected by tobacco use.

People who need support to quit smoking can call toll free at 1-800-Quit-Now.