



**CALIFORNIA TOBACCO
ENDGAME CENTER FOR
ORGANIZING AND ENGAGEMENT**

A project of the American Heart Association®

Raising our Voices Against Tobacco for Our LGBTQ Communities

California has come a long way in the fight against tobacco, yet tobacco use remains the leading cause of premature death and disease in California where an estimated 40,000 adults die each year due to smoking. The tobacco industry continues to thwart our efforts and to addict new users each and every day. Our most critical work lies ahead of us.

Cigarette smoking among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) individuals in the U.S. is higher than among heterosexual/straight individuals due in large part to the tobacco industry's aggressive advertising in the LGBTQ community. The social stress of living in a society that can be hostile to LGBTQ people may also play a factor in higher smoking rates, particularly among LGBTQ youth. It is time to take a stand against the deadly products that place an unfair health burden on the LGBTQ community.

Tobacco products impact the health of our LGBTQ community.

- Cigarette smoking prevalence of the California's LGBTQ population is 18.5%, compared to 13.0% for non-LGBTQ adults.⁵
- The LGBTQ community alone spends \$7.9 billion on tobacco.³
- The limited data on smoking rates for transgender individuals shows that transgender adults use tobacco products at higher rates than cisgender adults.⁶
- Rates of tobacco use vary within the LGBTQ community. Bisexual women are up to three times more likely to smoke cigarettes than heterosexual females.⁸
- LGBTQ individuals are less likely to have health insurance than heterosexual individuals, which may negatively affect health as well as access to cessation treatments, including counseling and medication.¹
- Studies over the past decade suggest that gay men smoke at higher rates than men in the general U.S. population. This puts gay and bisexual men at high risk for smoking-related illness.
- Gay men have high rates of HPV infection which, when coupled with tobacco use, increases their risk for anal and other cancers.
- Smoking is especially dangerous for people living with HIV, as it raises your chances for getting heart disease, cancer, serious lung diseases and infections such as pneumonia, and other illnesses.
- Among women, secondhand smoke exposure is more common among non-smoking lesbian women than among non-smoking straight women.

The California Tobacco Endgame Center for Organizing and Engagement
A Project of the American Heart Association
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OrganizingToEndTobacco.org

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- Bisexual women are up to 3.5 times more likely to smoke, try their first cigarette at a younger age and have higher nicotine dependence than heterosexual women.
- Lesbian and bisexual youth are 9.7 times more likely to smoke cigarettes regularly, compared to their heterosexual peers.
- LGBTQ Californians are at increased vulnerability for COVID-19 due to higher rates of tobacco use and chronic health conditions such as HIV, cancer, and diabetes.
- LGBTQ people are also more likely to delay needed medical care due to past experiences of discrimination, unwelcoming environments, or other barriers to seeking care such as high costs and lack of affirming providers in their area.

The tobacco industry has targeted the LGBTQ population for over a quarter century.

- High rates of tobacco use within the LGBTQ community are due in part to the aggressive marketing by tobacco companies that sponsor events, bar promotions, giveaways, and advertisements.¹
- By capitalizing on LGBTQ social issues, such as marriage equality and visibility in media/advertisement, tobacco companies are co-opting positive LGBTQ messaging in their campaigns to sell tobacco.
- Big Tobacco has targeted the LGBTQ community since at least 1991, advertising at Pride and other LGBTQ community events, and contributing to both national and local LGBTQ and HIV/AIDS Organizations.⁴
- Internal memos reveal that tobacco companies sought gay voters' support as early as 1983,² when they wished to repeal workplace smoking bans in San Francisco.¹² An internal Philip Morris memo from 1985 reveals grudging admiration at how views of gays and lesbians as customers were changing.¹⁴

COVID-19 underscores the importance of addressing LGBTQ tobacco related disparities.

- Research shows that smoking is most likely associated with people getting sicker from COVID-19.^{9,12}
- Smoking weakens the immune system and the body's ability to fight infections such as COVID-19.¹⁰
- People who smoke or vape and get COVID-19 virus are at increased risk of developing more severe symptoms.^{10,12}
- Smoking, vaping, or using a hookah can spread COVID-19 as users are repeatedly putting their hands to their mouths and faces, often in a social setting.¹¹

While we are fighting a deadly pandemic, there is a teen vaping epidemic in this state.

- LGBTQ youth start using tobacco earlier and use tobacco at higher rates compared to heterosexual youth.⁷
- 3 in 10 LGB youth currently use electronic vapor products like e-cigs, which is 25% higher than heterosexual youth; And more than half of LGB youth have tried e-cigarettes.¹³
- Smoking is perceived as a social activity embedded into the fabric of the LGBTQ young adult community
- Smoking serves as a vehicle for bonding over the stresses of being discriminated against for being LGBTQ at school and with their families and friends
- LGBTQ youth smoking with other LGBTQ people gives them a social space to make friends.



SOURCES

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Social Media



Tobacco disproportionately impacts the LGBTQ community. LGBTQ youth start using tobacco earlier and use tobacco at higher rates compared to heterosexual youth. Raise your voice in support of our vulnerable youth.

Join us:

organizingtoendtobacco.org/virtualdayofaction2020

#VoicesAgainstTobacco #WeBreathe

Quitting tobacco can lower the risk of complications during gender affirming surgeries.



California Smokers Helpline
1-800-NO-BUTTS

WE BREATHE

SUPPORTING TOBACCO-FREE LGBTQ COMMUNITIES

Raise your voice against tobacco-industry marketing tactics which aggressively targets the LGBTQ community contributing to high rates of tobacco use.

Join us:

organizingtoendtobacco.org/virtualdayofaction2020

#VoicesAgainstTobacco #WeBreathe

People living with HIV who quit smoking tobacco live longer and healthier lives.



California Smokers Helpline
1-800-NO-BUTTS

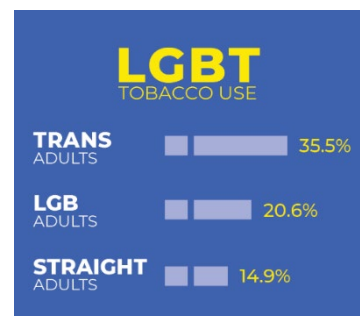
WE BREATHE

SUPPORTING TOBACCO-FREE LGBTQ COMMUNITIES

This #Pride Month, we urge our legislative leaders in @calgbt to be partners in ending #LGBTQ tobacco-related disparities so that all our communities can thrive and live long, healthy lives. Learn more at:

organizingtoendtobacco.org/virtualdayofaction2020

#VoicesAgainstTobacco #WeBreathe



Out4MentalHealth

SOURCE: TRANSMENTALHEALTH.ORG