



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

A project of the American Heart Association®



Raising our Voices Against Tobacco: Reducing Tobacco Use Among Californian Women

California has come a long way in the fight against tobacco, yet 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.

More women die of lung cancer each year than breast, ovarian, and cervical cancer combined.¹ Due to aggressive targeting by the tobacco industry, women are now just as likely to die from smoking as men.² It's time to take a stand against the products that are destroying women's lives and families.

How women are affected by tobacco:

- More than 200,000 women die each year in the U.S. as a result of smoking-related diseases.²
- Women's risk of dying from smoking-related diseases has tripled over the last 50 years.³
- Overall smoking rates have not declined as quickly for women as for men.⁸
- Lung cancer has been the leading cause of cancer death among women since surpassing breast cancer in 1987.⁴
- Smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke during pregnancy are major factors associated with life-threatening risks to mother and child.⁵
- Smoking rates among US women vary by race and ethnicity, income, and education level.⁸ In California, 25.9% of white low-income adult women smoke cigarettes.⁹
- Women who smoke have a 25 percent greater risk of developing coronary heart disease compared with men who smoke.¹⁰

The tobacco industry has targeted women for nearly a century:

- False claims about "low tar" and "light" cigarettes have been used to mislead female smokers.
- Tobacco companies exploit social pressure faced by women and co-opt imagery of independent women to market their deadly products.
- After the Virginia Slims brand was introduced, the smoking rate among 12-year-old girls increased by 110%.⁶

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- The same exploitative marketing techniques used by tobacco companies to portray cigarettes as sexy and empowering are now being used to market e-cigarettes to women.

COVID-19 and tobacco are a deadly combination

- Research shows that smoking is most likely associated with people getting sicker from COVID-19.^{11,14}
- Smoking weakens your immune system and your body's ability to fight infections such as COVID-19.¹²
- COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted African American, Latino/Hispanic, Tribal Communities, LGBTQ, Rural and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders - some of the same communities hardest hit by tobacco industry targeting and the disease and death caused by tobacco.
- People who smoke or vape and get COVID-19 virus are at increased risk of developing more severe symptoms.^{12,14}
- 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.¹³

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

- Governor Gavin Newsom signed an executive order to confront the growing youth epidemic and health risks linked to vaping.
- Vaping devices are the most commonly used tobacco product in California.
- More than 80 percent of high-school students who consume tobacco use a vaping device.
- Of the California teens who consume tobacco products, including vape products, 86.4% report using a flavored tobacco product.
- The tobacco and vaping industry use flavors to attract teens to vaping.

How smart tobacco policies can improve women's lives:

- Strong local retail licenses can give communities the resources they need to enforce minimum age to purchase and ensure girls don't get hooked on deadly tobacco products.
- Smokefree multi-unit housing policies can protect expectant mothers and their families from experiencing harmful secondhand smoke in their homes.
- Policies that increase access to smoking cessation programs can help reduce smoking among women of childbearing age.

SOURCES

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Social Media



Big Tobacco has been targeting women for nearly a century. As a result, more than 200,000 women die each year in the U.S. as a result of smoking-related diseases. This needs to stop now!

Join us: organizingtoendtobacco.org/virtualdayofaction2020/

#VoicesAgainstTobacco



Women who smoke have a 25% greater risk of developing coronary heart disease compared with men who smoke. Raise your voice against the tobacco products and marketing that are breaking our communities' and families' hearts! [insert breaking heart emoji]

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