



Raising our Voices for Health Justice for Our Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Communities

Health justice means bringing communities to the table, so everyone's voices are heard and people from all walks of life achieve the health and wellness they deserve.

Tobacco disproportionately impacts our AANHPI communities.

- Tobacco use is still the number one cause of preventable death for Asian Americans (AA), Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AA, NH, PI). Factors such as cultural perceptions of smoking, language barriers to services, and targeted marketing have contributed to high rates of smoking within these communities. It's time to eliminate the unfair health burden tobacco places on AANHPIs.
- Aggregated data is problematic for AANHPI communities because it lumps our large and diverse communities into one, masking disparities among specific subpopulations. In CA, it is reported that 8.1% of Asians are current smokers, but that figure masks higher smoking rates in AANHPI communities.¹⁵ When data on AANHPI smoking rates is left aggregated without question, we also leave behind AANHPI communities that have been impacted much greater than what the aggregated data show.
- 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 diseases and deaths caused by tobacco.
- Pacific Islanders in L.A. County are dying at a rate 12 times higher than whites from COVID-19, and 9 times higher than for Asians. Across CA, Pacific Islanders are more than 3 times as likely than whites to die from COVID-19.¹⁷

Among Asian Americans

- In certain Asian American (AA) populations, cigarette smoking prevalence is much higher than the rest of California. For example, the smoking rate of Korean males is 26.6% and 23.7% for Vietnamese males, compared to the smoking rate of California males overall at 16.2%.¹⁰
- Tobacco-related cancer and cardiovascular disease are the top two causes of death among AA individuals. Of the total deaths, 35% are attributed to stroke and heart disease and 27% to cancer.³

Among Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders

- NHPH youth have the highest use rate of any tobacco product (including e-cigarettes) than any other racial/ ethnic group at 23.4%.¹⁶
- Pacific Islanders are more likely to be exposed to dangerous secondhand smoke at home every day than the general California population.⁴
- Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPHs) use tobacco at a rate that is nearly triple that of AA.⁵
- Between 2005 and 2010, the leading cause of death for NHPHs was heart disease (34%) followed by cancer (24%), which are tobacco related diseases.⁶

The tobacco industry targets Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in their communities.

- Tobacco companies seek partnerships with local AA trade organizations, retailers, and community festivals (e.g., Lunar New Year). These partnerships take unfair advantage of community gatherings as a means to have direct access to AA, NH, and PI communities.
- The tobacco industry consistently targets AA, NH and PIs and considered the communities to be a “potential gold mine” due to already high rates of smoking in Asia and the Pacific. These high rates are directly influenced by highly concentrated populations in certain geographic regions, and the high proportion of retailers.⁸
- The tobacco industry targets Asian American and Pacific Islander youth through e-cigarettes and Puff Bars[®] flavors like lychee, milk tea, matcha, taro, guava and passion fruit.⁹

SOURCES

¹ Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) 1996-2011. Prepared by the California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program, March 2012.

² Carr K, Beers M, Kassebaum T, Chen MS Jr. *California Korean American Tobacco Use Survey – 2004*. California Department of Health Services, 2005.

³ National Vital Statistics System, 1999-2006 public use data file. Death rates are age-adjusted to the 2000 US standard population. Created by statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov, March 2010.

⁴ Furuyama, K and Lew, R. *Tobacco Use Among Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Communities in California, Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy & Leadership*, 2012.

⁵ CDC, Asian Americans and Tobacco Use <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/asian-americans/index.htm>

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2005-2010. Mortality Multiple Cause Files.

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Summary Health Statistics for the U.S. Population: National Health Interview Survey, 2008*, Table 6.

⁸ Muggli ME, Pollay RW, Lew R, Joseph AM. *Targeting of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders by the tobacco industry: results from the Minnesota Tobacco Document Depository*. Tobacco Control 2002.

⁹ PreventiveMedicineReports. *Associations with E-cigarette use among Asian American and Pacific Islander Young Adults in California*, 2016

¹⁰ California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program. *California Tobacco Facts and Figures 2018*.



*Capitol Information & Education Virtual Day of Action 2021
Raising our Voices Against Tobacco for Our AANHPI Communities*

¹¹ *Preliminary Estimates of the Prevalence of Selected Underlying Health Conditions Among Patients with Coronavirus Disease 2019 — United States, February 12–March 28, 2020.* MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020; 69:382–386. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6913e2>

¹² Vardavas CI, Nikitara K. *COVID-19 and smoking: A systematic review of the evidence.* Tob Induc Dis. 2020;18:20. Published 2020 Mar 20. doi:10.18332/tid/119324

¹³ Al-Delaimy, Wael. Hookah and COVID-19: How Hookah Puts You at Risk, 2020, tobaccofreeca.com/health/hookah-and-covid-19-how-hookah-puts-you-at-risk/.

¹⁴ Tong, Elisa. “Protect Yourself from COVID-19: Stop Smoking and Vaping Now.” TobaccoFreeCA, 2020, tobaccofreeca.com/health/covid-19-stop-smoking-and-vaping/.

¹⁵ California Health Interview Survey 2015-2016

¹⁶ Odani S, et al. Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students — United States, 2014–2017. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep, 2018.

¹⁷ Huang, J. (2020, April 30). In LA County, Pacific Islanders Are Dying From Coronavirus At A Rate 12 Times Higher Than Whites. These Leaders Are Fighting Back. Last. Retrieved June 11, 2020, from https://laist.com/2020/04/30/pacific_islanders_coronavirus_death_rate_california.php

