



# Raising our Voices for our Tribal 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.*

*Tribal communities throughout California have grown or harvested tobacco and/or other plants for ceremonial or medicinal purposes for several centuries. The tobacco industry has exploited these traditions contributing to tribal communities having the highest commercial tobacco use rates in California. Many tribal communities are working to restore traditional tobacco practices and reduce commercial tobacco abuse.*

## **The tobacco industry has targeted tribal communities for decades by:**

- Sponsoring powwows and other cultural events.<sup>i</sup>
- Offering coupons and discounts on already lower tobacco prices.<sup>i</sup>
- Appropriating symbols and tribal imagery (e.g. Natural American Spirits brand depicts an Indian smoking a pipe).<sup>ii</sup>
- Vape shops using tribal designs on vaping devices and e-liquids (e.g. Tribal Vape shop with e-liquids flavors “Cherokee,” “Joe” and “Pow Wow”).<sup>iii</sup>

## **Tribal communities are disproportionately impacted by tobacco:**

- Cardiovascular disease and lung cancer are the leading causes of death among American Indians/Alaska Natives.<sup>iv</sup>
- American Indians have the highest cigarette smoking rate compared to all other racial/ethnic groups in California.<sup>v</sup>
- 19.7% of American Indian high school students in California use tobacco, exceeding the statewide average of 12.7%.<sup>iv</sup>

## **Tribes throughout California are adopting and implementing policies to protect their communities against the harms of commercial tobacco, including:**

- Smokefree indoor workplace in gaming and non-gaming settings.
- Adding “smokeless tobacco” and “electronic-smoking devices” to the definition of tobacco use.
- Prohibiting smokeless tobacco products in places where smoking is otherwise allowed.
- Banning improper disposal of tobacco products on public areas within tribal grounds.
- Smokefree outdoor recreation facilities, public spaces including government buildings, commercial buildings, parks, sports fields, playgrounds, and areas on tribal land where children congregate.
- Smoke-free tribal housing including single dwelling homes, multiunit homes including common areas, balconies, and patios.

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<sup>i</sup> Lempert, Lauren K, and Stanton A Glantz. "Tobacco Industry Promotional Strategies Targeting American Indians/Alaska Natives and Exploiting Tribal Sovereignty." *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, vol. 21, no. 7, 2018, pp. 940–948., doi:10.1093/ntr/nty048.

<sup>ii</sup> D'Silva, Joanne, et al. "Tobacco Industry Misappropriation of American Indian Culture and Traditional Tobacco." *Tobacco Control*, vol. 27, no. e1, 2018, doi:10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2017-053950.

<sup>iii</sup> House Blends, [tribalvape.com/house-blends/](http://tribalvape.com/house-blends/).

<sup>iv</sup> "American Indians/Alaska Natives and Tobacco Use." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, 25 Nov. 2019, [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/american-indians/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/american-indians/index.htm).

<sup>v</sup> *California Tobacco Facts and Figures 2019*.

[www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDC/DCDC/CTCB/CDPH%20Document%20Library/ResearchandEvaluation/FactsandFigures/CATobaccoFactsandFigures2019.pdf](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDC/DCDC/CTCB/CDPH%20Document%20Library/ResearchandEvaluation/FactsandFigures/CATobaccoFactsandFigures2019.pdf).

