

2026 | CAPITOL INFORMATION & EDUCATION DAYS



Truth and Health: Protecting Latino Communities from Commercial Tobacco & Nicotine Harms

Tobacco disproportionately impacts our Latino community.

- Latinos are the third largest demographic group in California, and tobacco continues to affect Latino communities across the state. An estimated 1.2 million Latino adults use tobacco products, representing 11.2% of the adult Latino population.^{1,2}
- Three of the leading causes of death among Latinos —cancer, heart disease, and stroke—can be caused by cigarette smoke, which is also a risk factor for diabetes, a fourth major cause of death among Latinos.³
- Latinos are at a higher risk of secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure in multi-unit housing (MUH).^{4,5} Nearly half (49%) of Latino households include children, compared with 26% of non-Latino households.⁶ This makes SHS exposure especially harmful, as it can impair children’s learning ability and academic performance.⁷
- Latino communities are burdened with a higher density of retailers selling tobacco, at approximately 100 retailers per 100,000 residents compared to about 75 for the general population. Close proximity of tobacco retailers increases the likelihood of initiation of tobacco use among youth and young adults.^{8,9}
- The 2024 National Youth Tobacco Survey found that 19.7% of Latino middle school and high school students reported they have used a tobacco product.¹⁰ This is a direct result of intentional targeting of Latino youth by the



Tobacco Industry by creating vaping products in flavors such as horchata and churros.^{11,12}

- California’s smoke-free workplace law does not apply to outdoor work such as painting, construction, maintenance, and agriculture in which Latinos are overrepresented in these jobs.^{13,14} Latinos are also overrepresented in hospitality and housekeeping jobs, where they are often exposed to secondhand and thirdhand smoke.^{15,16,17}
- Haro-Ramos and Rodriguez (2022) found that immigration policy vulnerability is significantly associated with anxiety and depression among Latino day laborers. Roche et al. (2018) found that Latino parents who perceived greater impacts of immigration actions and news reported significantly higher levels of

psychological distress. When political climates generate sustained fear and uncertainty, stress becomes chronic. Chronic stress elevates cortisol levels, disrupts physiological regulation, and increases vulnerability to harmful coping behaviors, including tobacco use.^{18,19}

- Among adolescents in ninth and tenth grades from Southern California, flavored non-tobacco oral nicotine products were the second most

commonly used nicotine product, behind e-cigarettes. Hispanic ethnicity, female and gender minority identity, and sexual minority identity were associated with greater odds of use of non-tobacco oral nicotine products among adolescents.²⁰

REFERENCES

1. California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Control Program. California Tobacco Facts and Figures 2024. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health; May 2024
2. California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Prevention Program. California Tobacco Facts and Figures 2025. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Public Health; August 2025.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Hispanic and Latino People Experience a Health Burden from Commercial Tobacco*. 17 Oct. 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco-health-equity/collection/hispanic-latino-health-burden.html>.
4. Talluri R, Shete SS, Shastri SS and Shete S (2024) Secondhand tobacco smoke exposure in homes and vehicles in youth: disparities among racial, and sexual and gender minorities. *Front. Public Health* 12:1370552. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2024.1370552
5. Unger, J. B., Soto, D. W., Rendon, A. D., Baezconde-Garbanati, L., & Cruz, T. B. (2019). Empowering Hispanic Multiunit Housing Residents to Advocate for Smokefree Policies: A Randomized Controlled Trial of a Culturally Tailored Fotonovela Intervention. *Health Equity*. https://doi.org/10.1089_heq.2018.0098
6. California Senate Office of Research. A Statistical Picture of Latinos in California: 2017 Update. July 2017. <https://latinocaucus.legislature.ca.gov/sites/latinocaucus.legislature.ca.gov>
7. Yolton K, Dietrich K, Auinger P, Lanphear BP, Hornung R. Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke and cognitive abilities among U.S. children and adolescents. *Environ Health Perspect*. 2005 Jan;113(1):98-103. doi: 10.1289/ehp.7210. PMID: 15626655; PMCID: PMC1253717.
8. California Cigarette and Tobacco Products Retailer Licensees, March 29, 2024. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Tax and Fee Administration.
9. UNDO. *How Big Tobacco Targets Hispanic/Latino Communities*. 23 Sept. 2024, <https://www.undo.org/story-of-inequity/hispanic-latino>.
10. Jamal, Ahmed, et al. "Tobacco Product Use Among Middle and High School Students — National Youth Tobacco Survey, United States, 2024." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 73, no. 41, 17 Oct. 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/wr/mm7341a2.htm>.
11. Ellis, Reggie. "Cities Take Issue with Unsettling Smoke." *The Sun-Gazette*, 23 Oct. 2019, <https://thesungazette.com/articlehealth/2019/10/22/cities-take-issue-with-unsettling-smoke/>.
12. El Tecolote Staff. "Flavored Tobacco Products Target Youth: Do Us a Favor, No More Flavor." *El Tecolote*, 10 Apr. 2017, <https://eltecolote.org/content/en/flavored-tobacco-products-target-youth-do-us-a-favor-no-more-flavor/>.
13. California Labor Code § 6404.5. California Public Law, https://california.public.law/codes/labor_code_section_6404.5.
14. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity, 2018. BLS Reports, U.S. Department of Labor, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/race-and-ethnicity/2018/home.htm>.
15. St Helen G, Bernert JT, Hall DB, Sosnoff CS, Xia Y, Balmes JR, Vena JE, Wang JS, Holland NT, Naeher LP. Exposure to secondhand smoke outside of a bar and a restaurant and tobacco exposure biomarkers in nonsmokers. *Environ Health Perspect*. 2012 Jul;120(7):1010-6. doi: 10.1289/ehp.1104413. Epub 2012 Apr 6. PMID: 22484462; PMCID: PMC3404659.
16. Matt GE, Quintana PJE, Fortmann AL, et al. Thirdhand smoke and exposure in California hotels: non-smoking rooms fail to protect non-smoking hotel guests from tobacco smoke exposure *Tobacco Control* 2014;23:264-272.
17. California Senate Office of Research. A Statistical Picture of Latinos in California: 2017 Update. July 2017. <https://latinocaucus.legislature.ca.gov/sites/latinocaucus.legislature.ca.gov>
18. Haro-Ramos, A. Y., & Rodriguez, H. P. (2022). Immigration policy vulnerability linked to adverse mental health among Latino day laborers. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 24(4), 842–852. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-021-01254-z>
19. Roche, K. M., Vaquera, E., White, R. M. B., & Rivera, M. I. (2018). Impacts of Immigration Actions and News and the Psychological Distress of U.S. Latino Parents Raising Adolescents. *The Journal of Adolescent Health : official publication of the Society for Adolescent Medicine*, 62(5), 525–531. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2018.01.004>
20. Alyssa F. Harlow, Erin A. Vogel, Alayna P. Tackett, Junhan Cho, Dae-Hee Han, Melissa Wong, Myles G. Cockburn, Steve Y. Sussman, Jennifer B. Unger, Adam M. Leventhal, Jessica L. Barrington-Trimis; Adolescent Use of Flavored Non-Tobacco Oral Nicotine Products. *Pediatrics* August 2022; 150 (3): e2022056586. 10.1542/peds.2022-056586

©2026

CA Tobacco Endgame Center for Organizing and Engagement
A Project of the American Heart Association

Funded by the California Department of Public Health, Grant # 24-10002
www.organizingtoendtobacco.org | organizingtoendtobacco@heart.org

