

# American Indians in California

## Cancer and Tobacco Use



### *American Indians and Cancer Facts*

- Commercial tobacco use is a risk factor for breast, lung, kidney, and bladder cancer, among others<sup>5</sup> (Figure 1)<sup>6</sup>.
- The leading causes of death among American Indians (AI) are cardiovascular and lung diseases<sup>7</sup>.

### *Tobacco Use and Healthcare Costs*

- In 2010, of adults 18 years of age or older, 31.4% of American Indians were current smokers compared to 21% among Whites, 20.6% among Blacks, 12.5% among Hispanics, and 9.2% among Asians<sup>8</sup>.
- Pregnant women who smoke cigarettes run an increased risk of miscarriage, premature infants, and low birth weight infants<sup>9</sup>.
- Among rural California Indians, 50% of current smokers allow smoking in their home<sup>10</sup> potentially exposing family and friends to secondhand smoke.
- Nearly \$800 million are spent on health care and lost productivity among the AI community<sup>11</sup>.

### *Why should tribes prioritize tobacco education and prevention?*

- We can save lives and protect our kids with tribal and community policies<sup>12</sup>.
- Policies can prevent and reduce initial tobacco use among youth<sup>13</sup>.
- Policies can also reduce secondhand smoke exposure at work and in the home.
- More culturally specific prevention and cessation programs are needed.
- Tobacco has a spiritual role among many AI tribes and has for many generations.

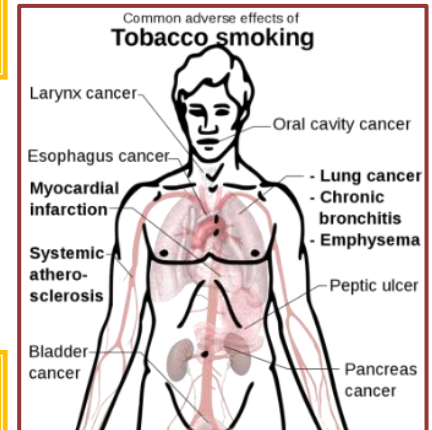


Figure 1.

5,7. ACS, CDPH, CCR. California Cancer Facts and Figures 2012. Oakland, CA: ACS, CA Division, September 2011. 6. Figure 8-6. Chapter 8: Mitchell et al. Robbins Basic Pathology. Phil.: Saunders. 8th ed. 8. CDC. Vital Signs: Current Cigarette Smoking among Adults Age ≥18 Years—US, 2005-2010. MMWR 2011; 60(33): 1207-12. 10. Hodge, F., and Nandy, K. (2011). Factors Associated with AI Cigarette Smoking in Rural Settings. *Int J Envir Res Pub Health*. 8(4).

If you should have any questions or are interested in learning more, please feel free to contact: Claradina Soto, MPH (Navajo, Pueblo). Project Coordinator, [toya@usc.edu](mailto:toya@usc.edu), (323) 442-8219.