

## Cigarette Smoking in Southeastern Pennsylvania

November 2016 Web Article

The American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout, which will be taking place on Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, encourages smokers to use the date to make a plan to quit, or to plan in advance and quit smoking that day. According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), by quitting—even for one day—smokers will be taking an important step towards a healthier life and reducing their cancer risk.<sup>1</sup> In the United States, tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death. Yet, some 42 million Americans, 17% of adults,<sup>2</sup> still smoke cigarettes.

Public Health Management Corporation's Community Health Data Base (CHDB) has tracked tobacco use among adults through the Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA) Household Health Survey for more than a decade. The Household Health Survey is conducted by telephone and includes 10,000 households in the SEPA region (Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties) every two years.

This article highlights data from the 2015 Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey to examine tobacco use by a number of important demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.

Approximately 18% of Southeastern Pennsylvania adults 18 years of age or older currently smokes cigarettes every day or some days.

- Philadelphia adults are more likely to smoke (23%) compared with residents of Delaware (19%), Bucks (16%), Montgomery (13%), and Chester (13%) Counties.
- Across the region, men are more likely to smoke than women (21% compared with 16%).
- Cigarette smoking among adults decreases with age; 22% of adults ages 18-39 currently smoke, as do 6% of adults 75 years of age or older.
- Black adults are the most likely to smoke cigarettes (25%) compared with Latino (22%), White (16%) and Asian (10%) adults.
- Cigarette smoking decreases as educational attainment increases. About one-third of adults in the region with less than a high school diploma (32%) currently smoke, while 9% of adults with a college degree smoke.
- Adults living in poverty more likely to smoke (34%) compared with adults at or above 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (16%).
- Adults who smoke cigarettes are more likely to be in fair or poor health (26%) than adults who do not smoke (14%).

### Conclusion

It is evident that tobacco smoke presents a serious health concern. In the Southeastern Pennsylvania region specifically, it is a burden unequally carried by individuals of minority racial/ethnic backgrounds, those with lower educational attainment, and those living in poverty.

For information about cessation resources and support in the Southeastern Pennsylvania region, please visit the Health Promotion Council's Southeastern Pennsylvania Tobacco Control Project at <http://www.sepatobaccofree.org/site/index.php>.

For more information about these findings, please contact Lisa R. Kleiner at [lisa@phmc.org](mailto:lisa@phmc.org).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cancer.org/healthy/stayawayfromtobacco/greatamericansmokeout/index>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cancer.org/healthy/stayawayfromtobacco/greatamericansmokeout/index>

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