

Tobacco Behavior and Public Opinion Survey: Final Report July 2010, April 2011 and February 2012

Background: The Tobacco Behavior and Public Opinion Survey (TBPOS) was developed to evaluate the Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) grant activities funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to assess smoking behaviors among current smokers, and assess awareness, attitudes, and social norms around tobacco control strategies.

Methods: The TBPOS was a Random-Digit-Dial cross-sectional phone survey conducted three times during the course of the CPPW grant: July 2010, April 2011, and February 2012. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Participants were identified through landline (90% of sample) and cell-phone (10% of sample) numbers. At each wave of data collection, 1,440 adults (18 years and older), including 720 smokers and 720 non-smokers, were enrolled. Smokers were over-sampled and the results were weighted based on the City's current smoking prevalence of 15.8% (NYC CHS, 2009) for Wave I and a current smoking prevalence of 14.0% (NYC CHS, 2010) for Waves II and III.

This report presents the latest survey findings overall and by smoking status. **Unless otherwise specified, results are from Wave III of the survey.** If a question was not included in Wave III, data from earlier waves are presented. Detailed results for Waves I and II are available here: [Tobacco Behavior and Public Opinion Survey: Results from Wave I and Wave II November, 2011.](#)

Statistically significant ($p < .05$) linear trends observed from Wave I to Wave III are highlighted, as well as significant changes from Wave II to Wave III. Noted differences between non-smokers and smokers are statistically significant, unless otherwise indicated. Differences between smokers and non-smokers and changes from 2011 to 2012 were estimated in SUDAAN 10.0 using the general linear contrast procedure. Linear trends from 2010 through 2012 were estimated in SUDAAN 10.0 using the orthogonal polynomial contrast procedure.

Retailer Prohibitions

Overall, half (51%) of New Yorkers favor limiting the number of tobacco retail licenses, including 54% of non-smokers and 30% of smokers. The proportion of non-smokers who opposed limiting the number of tobacco retail licenses increased from Wave I to Wave III (WI: 35%, WII: 38%, WIII: 41%).

Just under half (46%) of those surveyed in Wave I favor not granting any new licenses to sell tobacco, with non-smokers twice as likely as smokers to favor this idea (50% vs. 25%).

More than half of New Yorkers favor prohibiting pharmacies from selling tobacco (57%), including 60% of non-smokers and 39% of smokers.

Prohibiting grocery stores from selling tobacco is favored by half (50%) of New Yorkers overall, just over half of non-smokers (54%) and approximately one third of smokers (31%).

When asked about prohibiting stores located near schools from selling tobacco, two thirds of participants were in favor (66%), including a majority of both non-smokers (69%) and smokers (51%). Fewer smokers were in favor at Wave III than at Wave II (57%).

Nearly half of New Yorkers favor requiring tobacco sales to be limited to stores that sell only tobacco products (47%), a policy supported by 50% of non-smokers, but just 25% of smokers.

Price Increases

Overall, almost two thirds of New Yorkers surveyed favor increasing state or city taxes on a pack of cigarettes (66%, Wave II). Most Wave II survey participants (75%) favor a tax increase earmarked for programs to prevent and treat smoking, while 80% of Wave II participants favor a cigarette tax increase earmarked to fund health care programs.

Support for increasing cigarette taxes is high among non-smokers (72%, Wave II), particularly when the money raised is used for programs to prevent and treat smoking (78%, Wave II) or health care programs (83%, Wave II). While only a quarter of smokers surveyed favor increasing taxes on cigarettes (25%, Wave II), the support for new taxes doubles among smokers if revenue is earmarked for programs to prevent and treat smoking (56%, Wave II) or used to fund health care programs (60%, Wave II).

More than two thirds of New Yorkers (70%, Wave II) favor increasing state or city taxes on tobacco products other than cigarettes. These include cigars, cigarillos, loose tobacco, and smokeless products. Non-smokers are more likely than smokers to favor tax increases on tobacco products other than cigarettes (75% vs. 39%, Wave II).

Product Placement

Keeping tobacco products out of customers' view is favored by more than half of those surveyed (57% overall, 60% of non-smokers and 39% of smokers). Overall, fewer New Yorkers favored keeping tobacco products out of customers' view at Wave III than at Wave II (61%).

Payments to Retailers

More than half of New Yorkers favor prohibiting tobacco companies from paying New York City retailers to display their products and advertisements (54% overall), including 40% of smokers and 56% of non-smokers.

Minimum Age

Two-thirds (67%) of New Yorkers favor raising the minimum age to purchase cigarettes from age 18 to 21. Non-smokers are more likely than smokers to favor this policy (69% vs. 60%). Among smokers, support for raising the minimum age to purchase cigarettes declined from 66% at Waves I and II.

Price Promotions

More than half of participants overall support prohibiting price promotions such as coupons and two-for-one deals on cigarette packs (53%), including 55% of non-smokers and 44% of smokers. Opposition to this measure decreased from Wave II to Wave III overall (WII: 48%, WIII: 42%), among smokers (WII: 56%, WIII: 50%) and among non-smokers (WII: 46%, WIII: 41%).

Nearly half of all participants agreed that tobacco price promotions encourage youth to smoke (47%). Smokers were about half as likely as non-smokers to believe that price promotions encourage youth to smoke (26% vs. 51%). More New Yorkers overall agreed that price promotions make it easier for youth to buy cigarettes (57% overall; 60% of non-smokers vs. 35% of smokers).

Secondhand Smoke, Smoking Regulations, and Signage

At each wave of the survey, participants were asked about their perceptions of secondhand smoke in specific locations and whether or not they thought smoking was prohibited in these locations. To evaluate CPPW activities intended to raise awareness of outdoor smoking restrictions, we also asked New Yorkers to report whether they had observed “no smoking” signs at specific locations in the last three months.

Secondhand Smoke

Over half of New Yorkers overall (59%) and non-smokers (65%) said that secondhand smoke is a problem in outdoor public places within a few feet of them. The percentage of smokers reporting this problem declined from Wave I to Wave III (WI: 30%, WII: 33%; WIII: 24%).

Most participants said that secondhand smoke is a problem in lines in outdoor waiting areas for a bus or taxi at NYC airports or Port Authority and George Washington Bridge Bus Terminals (65% overall; 70% of non-smokers; and 37% of smokers).

The majority of both smokers and non-smokers said that secondhand smoke is a problem around hospital entrances or grounds in NYC (76% overall; 79% of non-smokers; and 55% of smokers – a decline from 63% of smokers at Wave II).

More than half of participants (57% overall; 62% of non-smokers; and 28% of smokers – down from 33% of smokers at Wave II) said that secondhand smoke is a problem on college and university campuses or facilities in NYC. The percentage of New Yorkers who said that secondhand smoke *was not a problem* on college and university campuses increased from 32% at Wave II to 37% at Wave III.

Awareness of Smoking Regulations

Awareness of smoking restrictions increased from Wave I to Wave III of the survey overall and among smokers and non-smokers alike. At Wave III, 32% of participants overall knew smoking was prohibited in lines in outdoor waiting areas for a bus or taxi at NYC airports or Bus Terminals (versus 26% at Wave I and 27% at Wave II); 55% knew that smoking is prohibited around hospital entrances and grounds (versus 48% in Wave I and 53% at Wave II), and 27% were aware that smoking is prohibited on college and university campuses and facilities (versus 22% at Wave I and 26% at Wave II). Compared to non-smokers, smokers were more likely to be aware of the restrictions in lines in outdoor waiting areas for a bus or taxi at airports and Bus Terminals (32% vs. 38%) and around hospital entrances and grounds (53% vs. 67%).

Awareness of Signage

The percentage of New Yorkers who observed signs prohibiting smoking in outdoor waiting areas increased from 11% overall at Wave II to 15% overall at Wave III. A similar increase was observed among non-smokers (10% at Wave II to 14% at Wave III). An increasing percentage of smokers observed signs in outdoor waiting areas between Waves I and III of the survey (20% at Wave I, 15% at Wave II, and 25% at Wave III).

At Wave III, nearly half of participants reported seeing no-smoking signs around hospital entrances and grounds (41% overall; 38% of non-smokers; and 62% of smokers – up from 55% of smokers at Wave II).

Approximately 1 in 8 participants observed no smoking signage on college and university campuses and facilities (13% overall; 12% of non-smokers; and 19% of smokers). Between Wave II and Wave III, fewer smokers reported *not seeing signs* on college and university campuses at Wave III (61% vs. 53%).

Potential No Smoking Areas

At each wave of the survey, participants were asked if they favor or oppose prohibiting smoking in six specific locations: all outdoor areas on college and university campuses or facilities in New York City; all public parks; recreational areas, such as basketball courts and baseball fields; outdoor markets or street fairs; on all public beaches; and in front of the entrances to buildings, and on sidewalks.

College and University Campuses

At Wave III, 48% of participants (down from 54% at Wave II) favored prohibiting smoking in all outdoor areas on college and university campuses, including 50% of non-smokers (down from 58% at Wave II) and 32% of smokers.

Public Parks

Support for prohibiting smoking in all public parks increased from Wave I to Wave III among New Yorkers overall (WI: 48%, WII: 54%, WIII: 53%). At Wave III 56% of non-smokers and 33% of smokers favored prohibiting smoking in parks.

Recreational Areas

Prohibiting smoking in recreational areas is favored by 61% of participants overall and 63% of non-smokers. Support for prohibiting smoking in recreational areas increased among smokers from Wave I to Wave III (WI: 40%, WII: 48%, WIII: 47%).

Outdoor Markets

About half of New Yorkers overall favor prohibiting smoking in outdoor markets or street fairs (51%), including 34% of smokers and 54% of non-smokers. This represents a decline in support since Wave II among New Yorkers overall, smokers, and non-smokers (57%, 39%, and 60%, respectively).

Beaches

Half of New Yorkers overall (declining from 56% at Wave II to 50% at Wave III) and half of non-smokers (declining from 59% at Wave II to 53% at Wave III) favor prohibiting smoking at beaches, compared to only 33% of smokers.

Building Entrances

Just over half of New Yorkers overall (a decline from 61% in Wave II to 54% in Wave III) and non-smokers (a decline from 64% in Wave II to 57% in Wave III) favor prohibiting smoking in front of building entrances, compared to 37% of smokers.

Electronic Cigarettes

The Wave II survey included items on electronic cigarettes, also known as e-cigarettes. Only 3% of New Yorkers have ever tried an e-cigarette; including about one in eight (12%) smokers and just 2% of non-smokers. One third of participants overall (34%) favored a proposal that would prohibit smoking electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes in indoor public places (29% of smokers and 35% of non-smokers).

Social Norms

The Wave I survey included a series of items to assess social norms around smoking. At Wave I, 68% of New Yorkers overall agreed that someone can be a good role model even if they smoke, including 64% of non-smokers and 89% of smokers. When asked, "If I found out someone I like smokes, I would think less

of him or her,” 90% of smokers and 65% of non-smokers disagree, and 69% of New Yorkers overall disagree. However, 80% of New Yorkers agree with the statement that “smoking is unattractive,” including 84% of non-smokers and 56% of smokers.

At each wave of the survey, participants were asked if they thought smoking was an addiction, a choice, or a habit. Responses were consistent across waves. Most New Yorkers think that smoking is an addiction (61%), rather than a choice (20%) or a habit (19%).

At Wave II and Wave III of the survey, participants were asked how “most New Yorkers feel about smoking,” how “people who are important to you, like family and friends, feel about smoking,” and to estimate that the percentage of adult New Yorkers who smoke.

When asked how “most New Yorkers feel about smoking,” 52% of participants said most New Yorkers strongly or somewhat disapprove of smoking, a decline from 63% at Wave II. Non-smokers are more likely to say that New Yorkers strongly or somewhat disapprove of smoking compared with smokers (WII: 64% of non-smokers vs. 55% of smokers; WIII 53% of non-smokers vs. 47% of smokers).

Similarly, a lower proportion of participants at Wave III (74% overall, 66% of smokers, and 75% of non-smokers) reported that people who are important to them, like family and friends, strongly or somewhat disapprove of smoking compared to Wave II (82% of overall, 71% of smokers, and 84% of non-smokers).

Only 4% of participants overall estimate that the percentage of adult New Yorkers who smoke is 14% or less. Current smoking among adults in NYC is 14% ([Community Health Survey, 2010](#)). Smokers are more likely than non-smokers to over-estimate the percentage as more than 14% (86% of smokers vs. 79% of non-smokers). Participants’ overestimating of the percentage of New Yorkers who currently smoke significantly decreased from Wave II to Wave III (86% to 80%).

Housing

The Wave III survey included a series of items intended to assess New Yorkers’ opinions about smoking in multi-unit residential buildings. Nearly half of participants (47%) said they live in a multi-unit building with 10 or more units, while 22% said they live in a multi-unit building with fewer than 10 units. The remaining 31% of participants said they live in a home that is not attached to any other building.

One third (33%) of participants live in a completely smoke-free building, meaning that smoking is not allowed anywhere in the building, including apartments (36% of non-smokers vs. 17% of smokers).

Approximately two-thirds (64%) of participants favor a policy that would require landlords to inform tenants if their building permits or prohibits smoking inside apartments (68% of non-smokers vs. 45% of smokers). However only 39% of participants overall would pay more to live in a smoke-free building (43% of non-smokers vs. 15% of smokers).

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