

# The State of Tobacco in **WISCONSIN**



**Tobacco\* is the leading cause of preventable death in the state**

and costs Wisconsinites an average of  
**\$3 billion** in direct health care costs.



**7,850**  
Wisconsinites  
die each year

from smoking-related causes.



Smoking caused

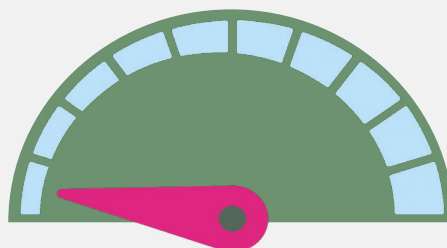
**\$5.6 billion**  
in productivity losses  
in Wisconsin.



People with mental health conditions or substance use disorders can have higher rates of death from tobacco-related diseases like cancer, lung disease, and cardiovascular disease.

**\$5.3 million**

WI Commercial Tobacco Prevention  
and Treatment Program funding  
(2023-24)



**\$161 million**

Estimated marketing expenditures  
by Big Tobacco spent in Wisconsin  
each year.

Wisconsin spends **less than 10%** of what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends. (CDC Best Practice State Spending: **\$57.5 million**)

\*This document focuses on commercial tobacco — mass-produced products sold for profit that contain chemical additives. Native Americans have used traditional tobacco in sacred ways for centuries. By focusing tobacco prevention and treatment on commercial tobacco, we acknowledge and respect sovereign tribal nations' relationship with sacred tobacco.

# The Wisconsin Commercial Tobacco Prevention and Treatment Program (CTPTP) works with state partners and local communities.

CTPTP partners with **19 regional tobacco coalitions** to support community-specific initiatives. Funded partners work with **youth, schools, faith communities, tobacco and vape retailers, law enforcement, and municipalities.**



Supporting local school districts in addressing the vaping epidemic is a priority. CTPTP supports **prevention, intervention, and cessation programs** and **alternatives to suspension** that prevent use and help young people quit.



CTPTP and partners support outreach to healthcare professionals and the general public. **This work saves \$1,986 per year in Medicaid/BadgerCare Plus expenses** per member who quits smoking.



The Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line **expanded its vaping cessation support for teens and young adults**; those ages 18-26 now have a text-based service that also offers nicotine replacement therapy.



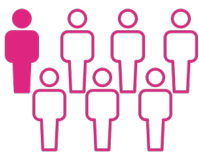
First Breath helps people make positive changes to their tobacco, alcohol, and other substance use during pregnancy and beyond. In 2023, First Breath reached **25.5% of all pregnant tobacco users in Wisconsin.**

## E-cigarette use among youth and young adults is a public health crisis.



The most common reason youth give for continuing to vape: **“I am feeling anxious, stressed, or depressed.”**

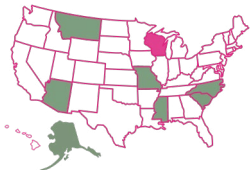
Vaping can harm young people’s mental health and brain development. Nicotine can exacerbate anxiety and depression as users become addicted. **It also can harm young people’s developing brains**, including focus, impulse control, learning, sleep, and mood.



In 2021, **1 in 7** Wisconsin high schoolers used e-cigarettes — a rate comparable to conventional cigarette use among teens in 2011. **This is almost a decade of lost progress.**



Wisconsin’s underage tobacco sales rate is **more than double the pre-pandemic rate** — up to 13.6% in 2023 from 5.5% in 2019.



Wisconsin remains **1 of only 8** states without a state **Tobacco 21 law**. Local police cannot assist with enforcement without a state law.



The Wisconsin tax on e-cigarettes is a fraction of the tax per pack of conventional cigarettes despite both products containing nicotine, making vapes more accessible to youth. **Tobacco tax increases are one of the most effective ways to reduce tobacco use.**

## The indoor smoke-free air law does not currently include all forms of smoking — like e-cigarettes and cannabis.



**78%** of Wisconsinites support the state’s smoke-free air law.

**18%** neither support nor oppose, and only **4%** oppose the clean indoor air law.

Preserving and strengthening Wisconsin’s smoke free air laws are the best ways to protect people from involuntary secondhand smoke and aerosol exposure.

# The tobacco industry uses menthol, candy, and fruity flavors to appeal to Wisconsinites from all walks of life and get them addicted to nicotine.



Almost **9 out of 10** current middle & high school students who have used e-cigarettes (**89.4%**) used flavored e-cigarettes, with fruit flavors being the most popular, followed by sweets, mint, and menthol.



**Over half** of Hispanic adults over 18 who smoke use menthol cigarettes. Menthol, a mint flavoring, makes cigarettes easier to start and harder to quit because of its soothing and cooling effect; it is the only conventional cigarette flavor still allowed on the market.



In Wisconsin, nearly **85%** of Black adult smokers use menthols. **Each year 45,000 Black Americans in the U.S die** from smoking and die at higher rates from tobacco-related diseases like cancer, heart disease, and stroke.



LGBTQ people who smoke are more likely to smoke menthol cigarettes than heterosexual people who smoke. Tobacco companies use phrases like **“Take pride in your flavor”** and rainbow imagery to market menthol and flavored products to LGBTQ+ people.

An estimated

**17,200**

**more adults in Wisconsin who smoke would QUIT if menthol cigarettes were no longer available.**



American  
Heart  
Association.



American  
Lung  
Association.



Scan QR code to view  
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