

# HEALTH

## Making the Next Generation Tobacco Free

Surgeon General says more work needs to be done

(AP) — More work needs to be done to keep young Americans from using tobacco, including creating smoking bans and increasing taxes on tobacco products, the U.S. Surgeon General's office said in a report released Thursday.

Almost one in five high school-aged teens smokes, down from earlier decades, but the rate of decline has slowed, the report said. It says it's particularly important to stop young people from using tobacco because those who start smoking as teenagers can increase their chances of long-term addiction. They also quickly can experience reduced lung function, impaired lung growth, early heart disease and other health problems like asthma.

More than 80 percent of smokers begin by age 18 and 99 percent of adult smokers in the U.S. start by age 26, according to the 920-page report, which is the first comprehensive look at youth tobacco use from the surgeon general's office in nearly two decades.

"In order to end this epidemic, we need to focus on where we can prevent it and where we can see the most effect, and that's with young people," said Surgeon General Regina Benjamin. "We want to make our next generation tobacco-free, and I think we can."

The report details youth tobacco use, health impacts, and tobacco marketing and prevention efforts. Officials hope the information will reinvigorate anti-tobacco efforts and spark public activism in reducing death and disease caused by tobacco use.

The report also recommended



Smoking among youth has declined in recent years, but more needs to be done to keep young Americans from using tobacco, according to a new report from U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin.



Regina Benjamin

dents has declined from 27.5 percent to 19.5 percent, or about 3 million students, but the rate of decline has slowed in recent years. About 5.2 percent, or 600,000 middle school students also are current smokers. According to the report, every day in the U.S., more than 3,800 people under the age of 18 smoke their first cigarette and more than 1,000 of them become daily smokers. They replace the 1,200 people who die each day in the U.S. from smoking.

anti-smoking campaigns and increased restrictions under the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's authority to regulate tobacco as other ways to prevent adolescents and young adults from using tobacco products.

Benjamin did not point fingers on why youth tobacco use continues. Instead, she wants to see how the nation as a whole can best address the issue, she said.

"I don't want to focus on blame, I want to focus on prevention," she said. "I want to make sure we're doing everything that we can to prevent kids from ever starting to smoke or use tobacco products."

Smoking among high school stu-



Carol Marquez, M.D.  
Radiation Oncologist

### Health Screenings at Irvington

For residents living with diabetes, high blood pressure or a family history of these conditions, Irvington Covenant Church will host free kidney health screenings on Saturday, March 17 at 4046 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Although walk-ins are welcomed, participants of the event, presented by the National Kidney Founda-

tion, are encouraged to call the toll free number to register for an appointment. Anyone who plans to complete a blood test is also encouraged to prepare by fasting eight hours prior to the screening for the best results.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 888-427-5653, extension 117 or e-mail Samantha.morotti@kideny.org.

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