

## **LGBT**

**Smoking Prevalence:** In 2013, the smoking rate was 51% higher among LGBT adults (26.6%) than straight adults (17.6%).<sup>1</sup>

- Overall, sexual minorities are 1.5 to 2.5 times more likely to smoke cigarettes than their heterosexual counterparts.<sup>61</sup> Bisexual women are up to three and a half times more likely to be smokers than heterosexual women.<sup>61</sup>
- Smoking rates among LGBT youth are estimated to be considerably higher (38%- 59%) than those among adolescents in general (28% -35%).<sup>62</sup>
- Several factors such as higher levels of social stress, frequent patronage of bars and clubs, higher rates of alcohol and drug use, and direct targeting of LGBT consumers by the tobacco industry may be related to higher prevalence rates of tobacco use among LGBT groups compared to the general population.<sup>62</sup>

### **Cessation:**

- Data on interest in quitting, quit attempts and successful smoking cessation among LGBT populations is very limited. A 2012 study using a convenience sample of LGBT smokers in Colorado found that 47.2% had made a past year quit attempt, a rate that is lower than the NHIS 2010 rate among all adults ages 18-54 at 53.1%.<sup>63</sup>
- Compared to all adult smokers, more LGBT smokers believe smoking increases their risk of diseases such as lung cancer and heart disease. However, some research indicates that fewer LGBT smokers have made quit attempts (75% compared with 80% of all adults).<sup>64</sup>
- Although lesbians and women who have sex with women (WSW) smoke at the highest rates, one study found that lesbian periodicals had the fewest cessation ads: only eight appeared over a ten-year period, compared to over 1,000 in periodicals targeted to gay men.<sup>65</sup>

### **Health Effects:**

- Smoking compounds many of the health risks presented by HIV/AIDS, which continues to disproportionately affect members of the LGBT community, especially gay men. It appears that HIV increases the risk of lung cancer by twofold independent of smoking behavior, a smaller but still significant risk factor compared with smoking, which raises risk tenfold.<sup>66</sup>

### **Marketing:**

- Industry documents show that tobacco companies were aware of high smoking rates among sexual minorities, and marketing plans illustrate the companies' efforts to exploit

the LGBT market.<sup>67-69</sup> Analysis of tobacco marketing has demonstrated lesbian and gay youth as an emerging target community.<sup>70</sup>

- One tobacco industry document explained, "A large percentage of gays and lesbians are smokers. In order to grow the Benson & Hedges brand, it is imperative to identify new markets with growth potential . . . Gays and Lesbians are good prospects for the Benson & Hedges brand."<sup>67</sup>
- The tobacco industry has targeted gays and lesbians through direct advertising in LGBT publications and indirect advertising in mainstream publications, community outreach and community promotions (such as "LGBT bar nights featuring specific cigarette brands?"), event sponsorships, and the provision of advertising dollars.<sup>71</sup>
- In 1995, a tobacco company conducted a marketing plan called "Project SCUM" (Sub Culture Urban Marketing) targeting urban San Francisco populations, including gays.<sup>69</sup>

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