

Executive Summary

In 2019, California proved to be a nationwide leader in combating the tobacco industry and protecting its youth from accessing tobacco. Annually, hundreds of millions of dollars are invested to better the lives of Californians by funding strong tobacco control and prevention programs. California's efforts have not gone unnoticed and are reflected in the American Lung Association *State of Tobacco Control (SOTC) 2020* national report.

The national SOTC report tracks progress on key tobacco control policies at the state and federal levels as of January 2, 2020. The report assigns grades to every state in five key areas. This year's report features California at the top of the pack, earning "A"s for Tobacco Prevention and Control Funding and Smokefree Air policies and "B"s for Tobacco Tax, Minimum Age, and Access to Cessation Services. These grades overall place us within the top 5 states in the country and reflect California's dedication to ending the tobacco epidemic.

Despite California's significant progress, tobacco continues to be the number one leading cause of preventable death in the state. Each year, approximately 40,000 adults die in California from smoking and over one-quarter of all cancer related deaths in the state are attributed to smoking. Further, California has about 40,700 high school students that currently smoke and over 7,700 kids begin smoking each year.

While the tobacco industry continues to find new methods to market and sell its products to a new generation of smokers, 2019 was a successful year for local tobacco control efforts. This year, 34 municipalities passed policies restricting the sale of flavored tobacco products. Communities throughout California are taking strong stances to protect their youth and all residents from the harms of tobacco.

To highlight these efforts, in coordination with the national report, the American Lung Association in California releases its *State of Tobacco Control 2020 - California Local Grades* report to track how well California municipalities protect their citizens from the burden of tobacco. The *State of Tobacco Control 2020 - California Local Grades* report is based on a review of county and municipal codes in four key areas for all 58 counties (which covers the unincorporated areas of each county) and 482 incorporated cities and towns in the state. Since the first such report in 2009, the number of communities with an overall "A" or "B" grade has increased dramatically.

The purpose of the *State of Tobacco Control 2020 - California Local Grades* report is to increase public knowledge about local laws that protect residents from the deadly toll of tobacco and to encourage local leadership to take action where improvement is needed. Grades are not intended to reflect the efforts of local tobacco control coalitions, the broader public health community or organizations working to advance local tobacco control policies. Instead, responsibility for enacting these life- and revenue-saving policies falls to elected officials in each community. Leadership on key issues and solutions to these difficult problems can come from every level of government. Local elected officials can, and should, take steps to protect residents from tobacco and secondhand smoke.

Highlights from this year's California report include:

- 7 communities improved their Overall Grade to an "A"
- 29 communities increased their grade to an "A" in at least one policy area
- 55 communities passed policies on emerging issues
- 19 fewer communities received an overall "F" grade compared to 2018