



Survey Method Changes Indicate 18.1% (2.7 Million) of New Yorkers Smoke Cigarettes

Adult smoking prevalence is monitored using the New York State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Two changes were recently made to BRFSS methods that affect smoking prevalence and other indicators, and are reported for the first time in 2011. Data from individuals who live in households with only cell-phones were included and a new weighting method was adopted. Weighting is the process by which survey data are adjusted to ensure representativeness and proper coverage of the population, and maintain validity. New weighting methods (called raking) take into account more socioeconomic variables and are being applied to BRFSS nationally. As a result of these changes, prevalence estimates for current cigarette smoking are higher than previously indicated, but likely more accurate.

The downward trend noted in smoking rates over the last few years appears to be unchanged with the new methods, but the absolute value is higher. In 2011 the prevalence of smoking among adults in New York State was 18.1%, equivalent to about 2.66 million adult smokers. This is down from 21.1% (using the raked weight) in 2009, a 14% reduction.

Starting with 2011, only the new weighting methods will be used to report smoking prevalence estimates. For more information on raking see <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6122a3.htm>.

Trends in adult smoking prevalence using old and new weighting methods. New York State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2001 – 2011.

