

One in 4 adults in Guam is a smoker. Among youth, 1 in 5 smokes. Guam's smoking rate is higher than most US States and Territories; this has remained unchanged since 2001.



# TOBACCO: SMOKING

## WHO SMOKES?

- Among adults, men smoke more than women. Among youth, girls smoke as much as the boys.
- Women in Guam smoke more than men in the US.
- Smoking is highest among the poor and the less educated.
- Chamorros have the highest smoking rate, followed by other Micronesians.

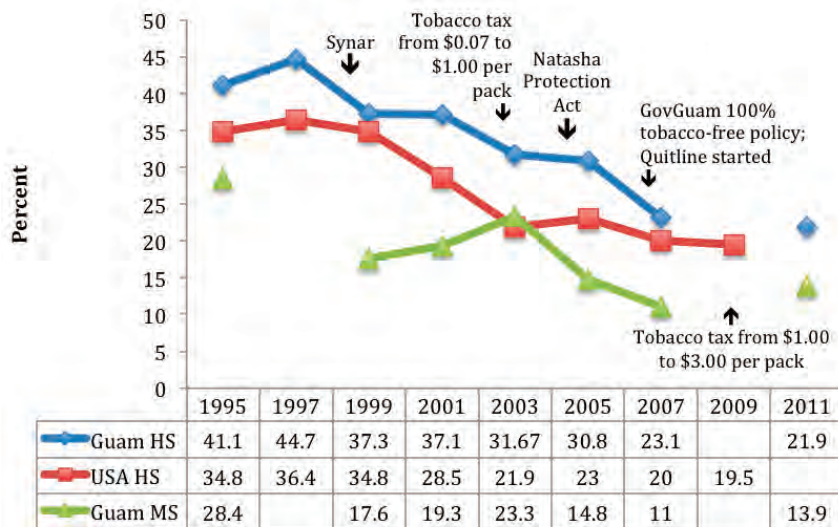
## WHAT IS THE PRICE, AND WHO PAYS IT?

- Tobacco kills at least 1 person on Guam every day. The top 3 causes of death are all tobacco-related.
- Lung and oral cancers, most of which are caused by tobacco, are highest among Chamorros and other Micronesians.
- Lung cancer is the top cause of cancer death for both men and women.

## WHAT WORKS TO REDUCE SMOKING?

- The declines in smoking prevalence have occurred shortly after **key policy initiatives** that **raised taxes on tobacco products, prohibited tobacco sales to minors (SYNAR), created smoke-free public places** and established **cessation programs**.

**Figure: 1. Current smoking, high school and middle school, Guam vs. US, 1995-2011**



Source: YRBS 1995-2011

## WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO REDUCE THE BURDEN FROM SMOKING?

To further reduce smoking:

- Fully enforce smoke-free laws.
- Further raise taxes on all tobacco products.
- Expand the Natasha Protection Act to cover all public places with no exceptions.
- Promote cessation through the DMHSA face-to-face cessation counseling, and the DPHSS telephone and web-based Quitline.

### For more information:

DMHSA 24-Hour Crisis Hotline 1 (671) 647-8833  
 Toll-Free Tobacco Quitline 1-800-QUIT NOW (7848-669)  
 Dept. of Public Health and Social Services Cessation Website [www.quitnow.net/guam](http://www.quitnow.net/guam)  
 Department of Youth Affairs 1 (671) 735-5032  
 Sanctuary, Inc. 1 (671) 475-7100  
 DMHSA-PEACE Website [www.peaceguam.org](http://www.peaceguam.org)



Produced by the Guam State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup

Smokeless tobacco use is rising for both adults and youth. The practice of chewing tobacco with betel nut is gradually increasing in Guam.



# TOBACCO: SMOKELESS

## WHO CHEWS OR USES SMOKELESS TOBACCO PRODUCTS?

- Current smokeless tobacco use among adults increased from 4.2% in 2009 to 6.9% in 2010. Among high school students, smokeless tobacco use increased from 6.3% in 2001 to 14% in 2011.
- Males are more likely to chew or use other smokeless tobacco products.
- Chamorros and other Micronesians have the highest use rates.
- Among adults, current users were younger and had lower educational attainment.

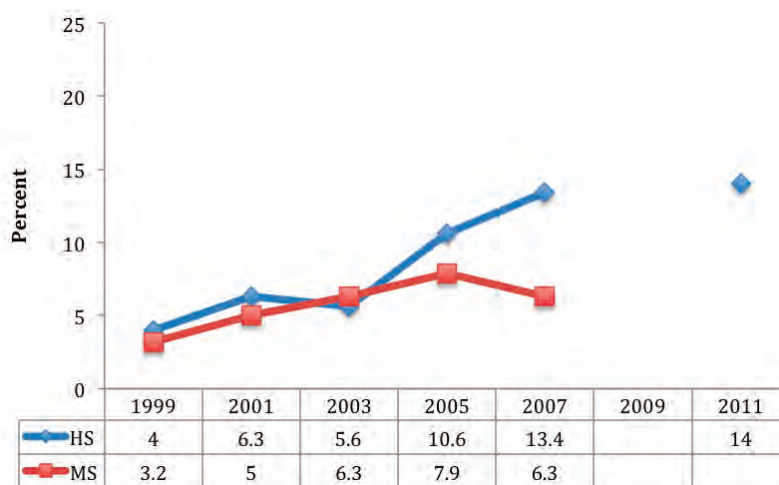
## WHAT IS THE PRICE, AND WHO PAYS IT?

- Oral cancer rates are 4 times higher for males.
- The incidence of oral cancer is twice as high in Chamorros and three times as high in other Micronesians as compared to the general US population.

## WHAT WORKS TO REDUCE SMOKELESS TOBACCO USE?

- Policy interventions that reduce smoking also work to reduce smokeless tobacco use, if they are expanded to encompass all tobacco products.

**Figure 1. Smokeless tobacco use, high school vs. middle school, Guam, 1999-2011**



Source: YRBS 1999-2011

## WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO REVERSE THE TREND IN SMOKELESS TOBACCO USE?

To reverse the trend in smokeless tobacco use:

- Raise taxes on smokeless tobacco products.
- Expand the Natasha Protection Act to make all public places not just smoke-free, but tobacco-free.
- Consider including betel nut in tax increases.
- Promote cessation through the DMHSA face-to-face cessation counseling, and the DPHSS telephone and web-based Quitline.

### For more information:

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About 1 in 3 adults have tried using marijuana and ~3-4% are current users. Among youth, nearly 1 in 3 are current users of marijuana. Lifetime and current marijuana use are higher among Guam's youth than among US youth in general.



# ILLCIT DRUGS: MARIJUANA, METHAMPHETAMINE AND STEROIDS

## WHO IS USING ILLICIT DRUGS?

### Marijuana

- Among adults, males, young adults and Chamorros are more likely to use marijuana.
- Among high school students, marijuana users are more likely to be male and Chamorro.

### Methamphetamine

- About 6% of adults and 3% of high school students reported having used methamphetamines in their lifetime.
- Individuals reporting lifetime use of methamphetamine were more likely to be male, Chamorro, fall within the 25 to 44 age group, have lower incomes and education attainment.

### Steroids

- About 3.4% of high school youth admitted to abusing steroids without a doctor's prescription in their lifetime.

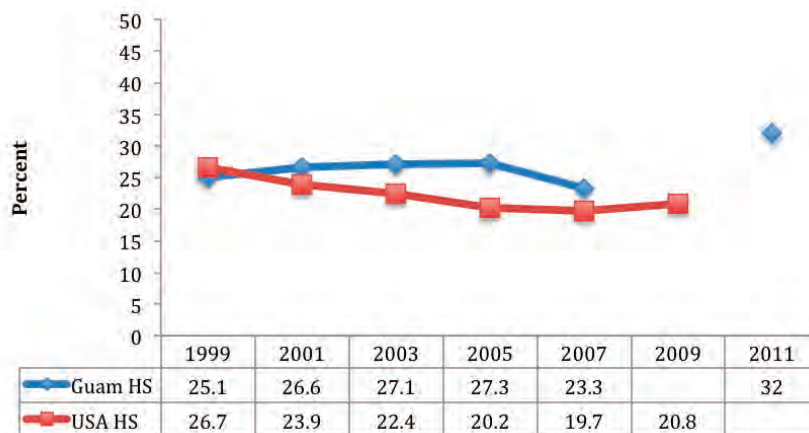
## WHAT IS THE PRICE, AND WHO PAYS IT?

- Illicit drug use is implicated in 7% of suicide deaths.
- Illicit drug use contributes to crime.

## WHAT WORKS TO REDUCE ILLICIT DRUG USE?

- Research shows that demand reduction and treatment strategies are effective in preventing and reducing illicit drug use.

**Figure 1. Current marijuana use, high school, Guam vs. US, 1999-2011**



Source: YRBS 1995-2011

## WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO REDUCE THE BURDEN FROM ILLICIT DRUG USE?

To reduce illicit drug use:

- Invest in science-based prevention programs that target risks and protective factors.
- Expand treatment and Recovery Services to address drug addiction and drug dependence.

### For more information:

DMHSA 24-Hour Crisis Hotline 1 (671) 647-8833  
 Department of Youth Affairs 1 (671) 735-5032  
 Sanctuary, Inc. 1 (671) 475-7100  
 DMHSA-PEACE Website [www.peaceguam.org](http://www.peaceguam.org)



Produced by the Guam State  
Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup

Suicide remains prevalent on Guam, with an average of 1 suicide death occurring every 2 weeks. Guam's suicide death rate of ~18-19 per 100,000 inhabitants has remained unchanged over the past decade.



# SUICIDE

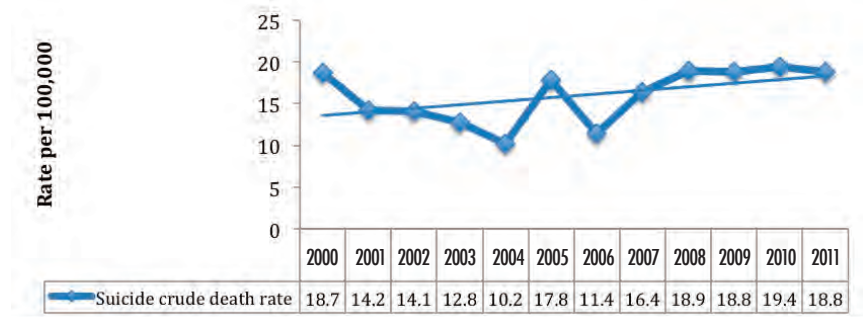
## WHO IS AT RISK FOR DYING FROM SUICIDE?

- Suicide deaths are highest among youth and young adults, with about 60% of all suicide deaths occurring in those under the age of 30 years.
- Micronesian Islanders, particularly Chuukese and Chamorros are significantly over-represented in suicide deaths.

## WHAT WORKS TO REDUCE SUICIDE?

- About one in three suicide deaths from 2008 to 2011 left evidence of their intent. If community members were better trained to pick up on suicide intentions or ideations, and to immediately refer those at risk to suicide prevention services, it may be possible to intervene before a suicide death occurs.
- Correlates of youth suicidal ideation and suicide attempts include sexual violence, depression, identifying oneself as gay or bisexual, and substance abuse. Addressing these issues may help mitigate suicide risk.
- Alcohol is implicated in almost one-fourth of all suicide deaths from 2008 to 2011. Other drugs of abuse are involved in 7% of suicide deaths. Fully implementing alcohol and drug abuse prevention strategies can contribute to reduce suicide mortality.

Figure 1. Annual trend in suicide crude death rates, Guam, 2000-2011



Source: Calculated based on data taken from the Office of Guam's Chief Medical Examiner, DPHSS Vital Statistics and Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans

## WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO REDUCE THE BURDEN FROM SUICIDE?

To reduce suicide:

- Prevent and control alcohol and illicit drug use.
- Aggressively screen to recognize and treat mental illness and depression.
- Build community capacity, especially among first responders, school personnel and leaders in the faith community, to identify persons at risk of suicide and train community members to effectively connect persons at risk of suicide to professional resources.
- Train emergency room personnel and other hospital personnel to do brief interventions and referral to DMHSA and other mental health treatment providers for all cases of attempted suicide.
- Promote skills training among youth in developing healthy relationships and in preventing physical and sexual violence.

### For more information:

DMHSA 24-Hour Crisis Hotline 1 (671) 647-8833  
 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1 (800) 273-8255 (Toll-Free)  
 Department of Youth Affairs 1 (671) 735-5032  
 Sanctuary, Inc. 1 (671) 475-7100  
 DMHSA-PEACE Website [www.peaceguam.org](http://www.peaceguam.org)

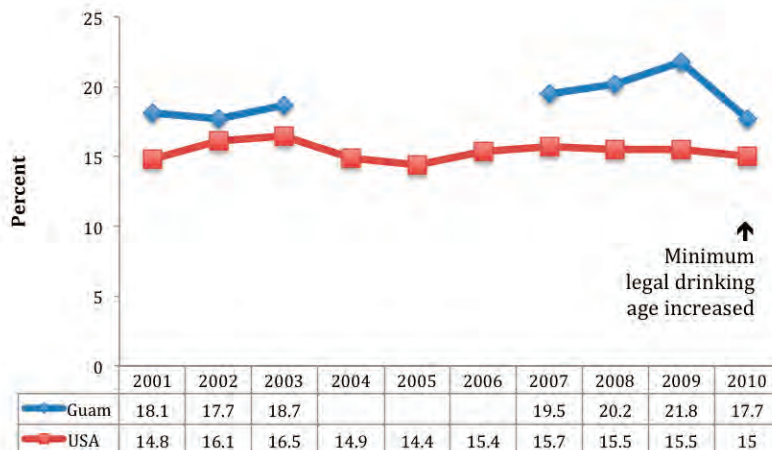


Produced by the Guam State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup

Almost 1 in 5 adults, and 1 in 7 youth are binge drinkers in Guam. Binge drinking among Guam men is about 30% higher than men in the US. Heavy drinking among men in Guam is 50% higher than men in the US.

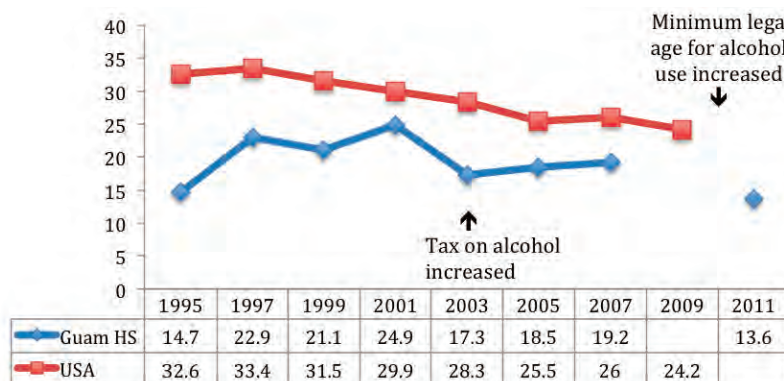


Figure 1. Binge drinking, adults, Guam vs. US, 2001-2010



Source: BRFSS, 2001-2010

Figure 2. Binge drinking, high school: Guam vs. US, 1995 to 2011



Source: YRBS 1995-2011

**WHO IS ABUSING ALCOHOL?**

- Among adults, heavy and binge drinking are more likely to be reported by men, and by younger adults. Heavy drinking is highest among Chamorros and Caucasians, while binge drinking is highest among Chamorros and other Micronesians.
- Unlike adults, among youth, girls are drinking as much as boys.

**WHAT IS THE PRICE, AND WHO PAYS IT?**

- Three of the top 5 causes of cancer death are alcohol-related.
- Liver cancer incidence and mortality for Chamorros and other Micronesians are higher than US rates. Other Micronesians have almost 9 times the US rate of dying from liver cancer, while Chamorros have over double the US rate.
- Close to 70% of all DUI arrests occurred among Guamanians and Pacific Islanders. These groups also have the highest binge drinking rates.
- Alcohol was involved in 1/3 of all traffic fatalities in 2009.
- About 1 in 4 suicides involve alcohol use.

**WHAT WORKS TO REDUCE ALCOHOL ABUSE?**

- In 2003, the youth binge-drinking rate decreased for the first time since 1995, coinciding with the legislated increase in taxes on alcohol products. In 2011, the high school binge-drinking rate in Guam dropped further.
- The adult binge-drinking rate in Guam was increasing until 2010, when it dropped for the 1st time since 2001.
- Notably, in 2010, Guam passed a law raising the minimum legal age for alcohol consumption from 18 to 21 years.

**WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO REDUCE THE BURDEN FROM ALCOHOL ABUSE?**

To further reduce high-risk alcohol consumption:

- Strictly enforce the minimum legal drinking age law.
- Consider raising taxes further on alcohol products.
- Further disseminate social marketing campaigns like the One Nation campaign to promote alcohol-free norms.

**For more information:**

DMHSA 24-Hour Crisis Hotline 1 (671) 647-8833  
 Department of Youth Affairs 1 (671) 735-5032  
 OASIS 1 (671) 646-4607  
 Sanctuary, Inc. 1 (671) 475-7100  
 DMHSA-PEACE Website [www.onenationguam.org](http://www.onenationguam.org)



Produced by the Guam State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup