Thirteen Years of Tobacco Efforts in Needham

The History

In 1995 after months of review and Public Meetings the Needham Board of Health passed the first of several regulations affecting smoking and the sale and distribution of tobacco products in Needham. During the next thirteen years the regulations were expanded several times and in 2005 prohibited the sale of tobacco products to any one under the age of twenty-one.

Education and Compliance Checks

The Needham Board of Health and the Needham Health Department has partnered to educate the community with the schools, private businesses, restaurant owners, the Police Department, the Needham Channel, the print media, and other town departments. Much effort and time has been spent over the years to educate the Tobacco Vendors on their responsibilities and the intent of the regulations. Recently an educational video was produced and a manual developed that were given to each vendor in town that will assist in training staff who sell tobacco products.

Compliance checks have been consistently done several times a year and tobacco vendors who illegally sold were brought before the Board of Health and had their permits suspended and were issued a fine.

The Results

Recent data from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Tobacco Control Program shows some of the results of the efforts of the past many years:

- **The smoking rate for adults in Needham is 8.0%. This rate is 56 percent lower than the overall rate for Massachusetts (8.0% in Needham compared to 18.1% statewide).**
- **The rate of illegal sales to minors (those under age 18) is 79 percent lower in Needham (2.1%) compared to the state of Massachusetts (10.3%) based on data from FY 2007.**
- **The rate of smoking during pregnancy in Needham is 90 percent lower than for the overall state of Massachusetts (.8% in Needham vs. 7.9% statewide).**
- **Mortality from lung cancer is 24 percent lower among males in Needham compared to the state of Massachusetts.**
- **Mortality from lung cancer is 33 percent lower among females in Needham compared to the state of Massachusetts.**
- **The rate of hospitalizations for lung cancer is 31 percent lower among females in Needham compared to the state of Massachusetts.**
- **The rate of hospitalizations for lung cancer is 21 percent lower among males in Needham compared to the state of Massachusetts.**

The Needham Board of Health is committed to educating and promoting help-programs for those trying to stop smoking. We will continue to monitor the sale of tobacco products to our youth in Needham.

For further information contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Tobacco Control Program at (617) 624-5900 or visit www.mass.gov/dph/mtcp