

# **Rural/Urban Gaps and Disparities in Tobacco Control:**

**A Report from the 2003 National Social  
Climate Survey of Tobacco Control  
*OSH Media Network 2004***

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# Support

- **The Office of Rural Health Policy of the Department of Health and Human Services**
- **The Rural Health, Safety, and Security Institute, Social Science Research Center**
- **Center for Child Health Research of the American Academy of Pediatrics**

# Research Problem

- **Smoking prevalence is higher in the most rural counties than in large central and fringe counties**
- **Goal: To identify rural-urban gaps and disparities in the social climate surrounding tobacco control**
- **Could lead to more appropriate, effective interventions to reduce smoking rates and exposure to second hand smoke**

# Adult Smoking

## 1997-1998 NHIS

- Rural Counties, 27.3%
- The Most Urban Counties, 22.6%

## 2003 SCS-TC

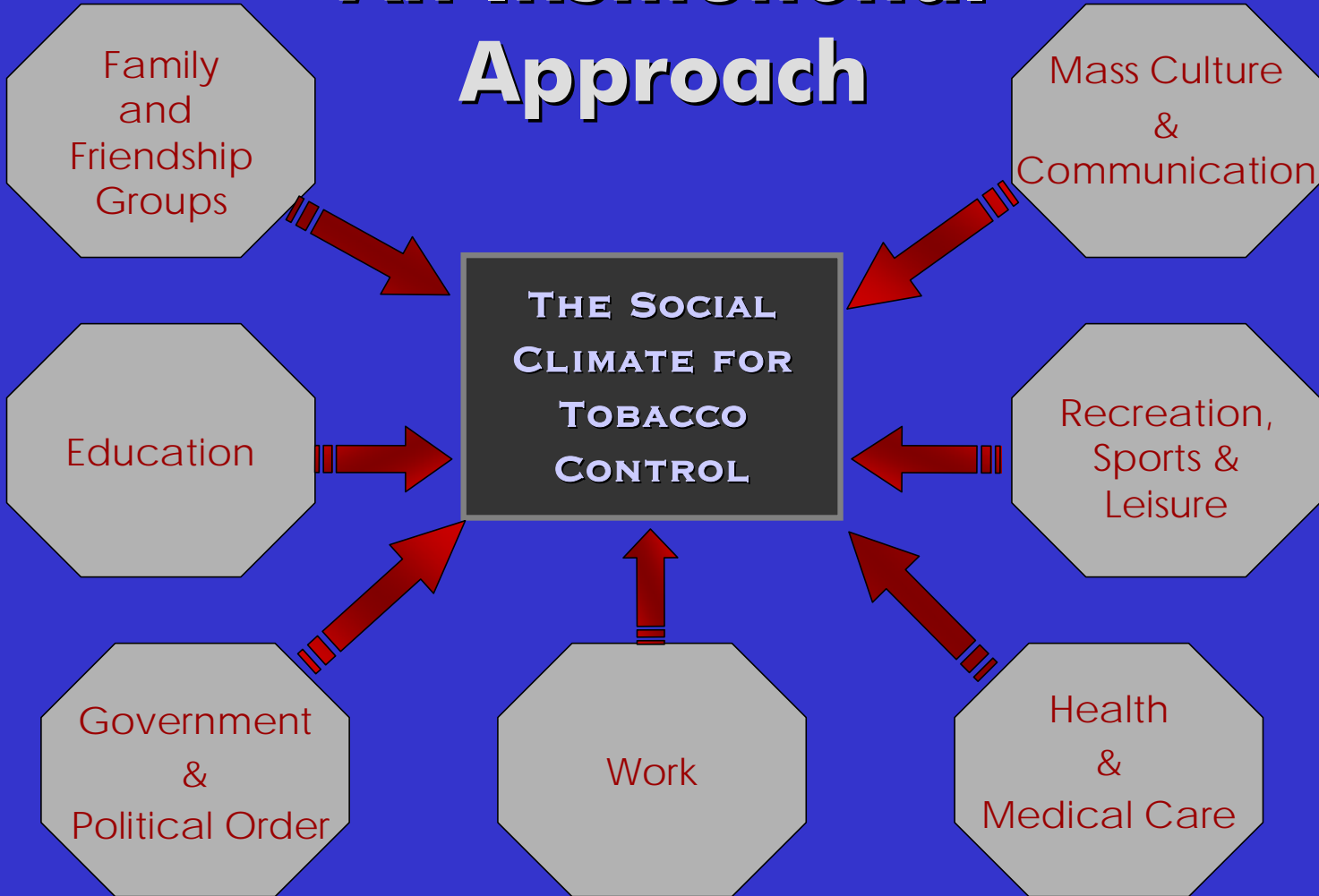
- Rural residents, 22.9%
- Urban residents, 17.9%
- $p = .004$



# Project Background

- **Smoking is a socially motivated behavior -  
- the social and political context matters**
- **Comprehensive tobacco control programs**
- **The Social Climate Survey provides an annual assessment of attitudinal, behavioral, and societal variables**

# An Institutional Approach



# **Social Climate Survey of Tobacco Control**

- **Provide timely, comprehensive data about tobacco control attitudes and practices**
- **Objectively measure, and ultimately monitor, progress towards intermediate objectives**
- **Annual cross-sectional assessments of the social climate: 2000- 2004**



# Simple Random Sample of Adults

- Computer assisted telephone interviewers
- Data weighted by race and gender within Census region
- 2003: N = 3,010; Co-operation Rate = 75.4%

# Levels of Urbanization

- **Eberhardt's Urban and Rural Health Chartbook**
- **Large Central Counties**
- **Large Fringe Counties**
- **Small Metropolitan Counties**
- **Rural Counties with a City**
- **Rural Counties without a City**

# Weighted Sample Characteristics

- 18.9% were smokers, 52.0% were female, 77.0% were white
- Residents of Rural Counties: 25.6%
- Residents of Urban Counties: 74.4%

# Rural-Urban Differences in Self-Reported Smoking Bans, $p < .05$

Ban	Urban	Rural
Household	77.7%	71.9%
Children Present	89.6%	85.5%
Family Vehicle	75.9%	69.8%
Work Areas	71.3%	64.3%
Convenience Stores	78.9%	68.3%
Fast Food	71.3%	60.6%
Restaurants	41.1%	31.3%

# Rural-Urban Differences in Knowledge, $p < .05$

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>
<b>Realize that ETS is very dangerous</b>	<b>95.2%</b>	<b>92.9%</b>
<b>Realize that chewing tobacco is very dangerous</b>	<b>80.1%</b>	<b>76.3%</b>
<b>Realize that smokeless tobacco is very dangerous</b>	<b>81.4%</b>	<b>77.4%</b>

# Rural-Urban Differences in Public Opinion, $p < .05$

Issue	Urban	Rural
Teachers should not be allowed to smoke on school grounds	70.3%	64.4%
Tobacco companies target teens to replace smokers who die	70.5%	65.7%
Tobacco companies have not been unfairly criticized by media	65.7%	60.5%
Smoking is NOT considered to be acceptable at workplace	62.1%	56.0%

# Rural-Urban Differences in Public Opinion, $p < .05$

Support for Smoking Bans	Urban	Rural
In indoor work areas	70.3%	64.0%
In fast food restaurants	84.7%	80.8%
In convenient stores	89.1%	84.6%
In restaurants	69.9%	65.8%

# Limitations

- Telephone surveys may under-represent some populations
- All data are self-report



# Summary

- **Although there is substantial support for tobacco control issues among rural respondents, there are several important gaps and disparities**
- **Disparities in protection from ETS are NOT attributable to a lack of knowledge, nor to a lack of public support**
- **Special characteristics of rural counties**
- **Greater need in rural America for smoking bans**

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