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%
• $p = 0.004$
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

Family and Friendship Groups

Education

Government & Political Order

Work

Mass Culture & Communication

Recreation, Sports & Leisure

Health & Medical Care

The Social Climate for Tobacco Control
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, $p < .05$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ban</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Household</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Present</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Vehicle</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Areas</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience Stores</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Food</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Rural-Urban Differences in Knowledge, p < .05

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realize that ETS is very dangerous</td>
<td>95.2%</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realize that chewing tobacco is very dangerous</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realize that smokeless tobacco is very dangerous</td>
<td>81.4%</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers should not be allowed to smoke on school grounds</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco companies target teens to replace smokers who die</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco companies have not been unfairly criticized by media</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking is NOT considered to be acceptable at workplace</td>
<td>62.1%</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rural-Urban Differences in Public Opinion, p < .05

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support for Smoking Bans</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In indoor work areas</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In fast food restaurants</td>
<td>84.7%</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In convenient stores</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In restaurants</td>
<td>69.9%</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.