

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 18% of adults in the U.S. were current smokers in 2009,<sup>1</sup> down from previous years but still higher than the Healthy People 2010 goal of 12%.<sup>2</sup>

While the regional rate of adults who smoke is decreasing, it is still higher than the national average. In 2010, 29% of Greater Cincinnati adults were current smokers, compared to 30% in 2005, 32% in 2002, and 35% in 1999.

## Smoking Rates Highest in Rural Counties in Kentucky and Ohio

Smoking rates in the rural Kentucky counties in our region<sup>3</sup> have steadily risen the last few years, going from 33% in 2002 to 43% in 2010. In the mostly rural, southeastern Ohio counties<sup>4</sup> of our region, 37% of adults reported they were current smokers, which has held relatively steady the last few years.

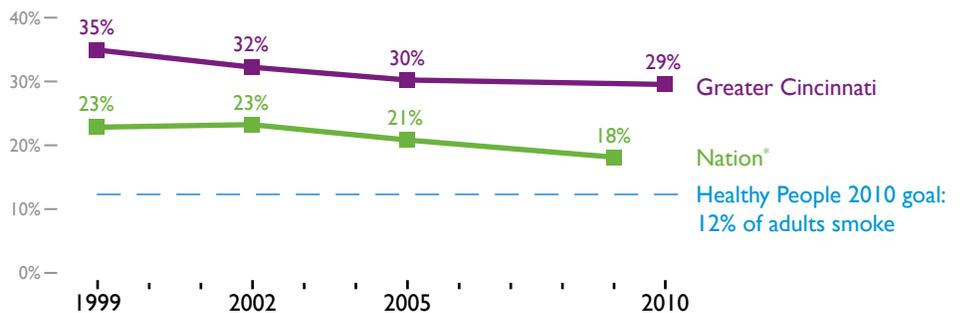
<sup>1</sup> National data are from the 1999, 2002, 2005, and 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, available at [www.cdc.gov/brfss/](http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/).

<sup>2</sup> The Healthy People 2020 goal for smoking remained at 12% of adults smoke. For more information about Healthy People 2010 and 2020, please visit [www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov).

<sup>3</sup> The rural Kentucky counties in the region are Bracken, Carroll, Gallatin, Owen, and Pendleton.

<sup>4</sup> The southeastern Ohio counties in the region are Adams, Brown, Clermont, and Highland.

## Adults ages 18 and over who are current smokers



\* National data are from the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) from 1999, 2002, 2005, and 2009, the most recent year for which data are available.

## Smoking Rates Highest among Low-Income Adults

Half of Greater Cincinnati adults (49%) living below 100% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG)<sup>5</sup> and 38% of adults living between 100–200% FPG reported being current smokers. This is double the 20% of adults living above 200% FPG who reported being current smokers.

## 6 in 10 Young Adults Have Never Smoked

On a positive note, 60% of young adults ages 18–29 reported that they have never smoked, up from 51% in 2005.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the

<sup>5</sup> In 2009, 100% FPG was an annual income of \$22,050 for a family of 4.

<sup>6</sup> People classified as "never smoked" are respondents who indicated that they have not smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their entire life.

rate of young adults who currently smoke went down, going from 38% in 2005 to 30% in 2010.

One possible reason for this is there have been a number of community- and school-based campaigns targeted toward children and young adults to encourage them not to start smoking. Taxes on cigarettes have also gone up, which has been shown to reduce smoking rates, especially among youth.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See Raising Cigarette Taxes Reduces Smoking, Especially Among Kids available at [www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0146.pdf](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/pdf/0146.pdf)