

Breathe Free.

OREGON LGBTQ COALITION AGAINST TOBACCO

Volume 1, Issue 2

Winter 2005
December

Welcome to Breathe Free!

- Our statewide program is supported by funding from the Oregon Department of Human Services.
- Breathe Free is a program of SMYRC (the Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center).

Inside this issue:

Newsbites	2
Queer Media Support	2
OR LGBTQ Smoking Rates	3
What's Next	4



The Gay American Smoke Out started in 1994. It coincides with the American Cancer Society's annual Great American Smokeout in November, but with messages and outreach tailored to LGBTQ communities. We chose The Gay American Smoke Out as a way of introducing Breathe Free to the community.

In Portland, Breathe Free hosted a night of bowling at Hollywood Lanes. With strikes, spares and—okay— a

Breathe Free hosts Gay American Smoke Out

few gutter balls (maybe only by me), we provided information on LGBTQ tobacco use and resources to quit, including quit kits and Quitline information.

Thanks to all the folks



Portland City Commissioner Sam Adams bowls for LGBTQ tobacco prevention.

who helped organize this event and to those who attended!

If you or someone you know is trying to quit using

Smoke Out in Corvallis

*By Stacey Edwards,
Tobacco Prevention Coordinator,
Benton County Health Dept.*

On November 17th, the Great American/Gay American Smokeout Day was hosted by Student Health Services and the Pride Center at the Oregon

State University campus. This was a day designated to bring attention to the tobacco industry and encourage tobacco users to quit.

Gretchen from OSU's Pride Center staffed a table specific to the LGBTQ community and proudly displayed educational mate-

rials and information on top of the draped rainbow flag. She also answered questions specific to the tobacco industry's targeting of LGBTQs and relayed the higher rates of tobacco use among the community. Interested visitors were shocked to learn about Project S.C.U.M. and view the tobacco advertisements dis-

Tobacco Prevention Newsbites



Last Drag LA's new campaign

Smokefree public schools.

On January 1st, all Oregon K-12 public schools will be smokefree at all times! The American Lung Association of Oregon states: "Studies have shown that in schools where there is strong tobacco policy that is well enforced, kids

New research findings. A recent study adds to the scientific evidence on the serious health effects of secondhand smoke among people exposed at work. Bar and restaurant workers are 50% more likely to get lung cancer from secondhand smoke than workers in non-smoking workplaces. Local researchers studied non-smoking bar and restaurant workers employed

in Washington and Oregon. They found that workers exposed to secondhand smoke face double the risk of having a specific lung carcinogen called NNK in their bodies. Over 35,000 Oregonians, including restaurant and bar workers, remain unprotected from smokefree workplace laws. For more information, go to:

www.WorkSmokeFree.com.

Smokefree Washington State!

In November, Washington citizens voted by a 2/3 majority to ban smoking in all public places, including restaurants and bars. I-901 also restricts smoking within 25 feet from all doorways, windows and air intakes of public places. That's how we say "comprehensive!"

New LGBT Tobacco Prevention Campaign Launched in CA.

To fight high rates of LGB tobacco use, LA County launched a new tobacco prevention campaign using humor and hot guys to promote smoking cessation. *The New York Times* reports ("Does Smoke Get in Your Eyes, November 14, 2005): "The campaign was inspired by a recent survey conducted on behalf of the California Department of Health Services, which found that 30.4 percent of gay men and lesbians in that state say they smoke. That is almost twice the rate of 15.4 percent in the general population and the highest rate among any of the state's minority groups.

Particularly worrisome to

Local Queer Media Promote Smoke Out



Reigning Rosebud Jinkx M. Dubois speaks out against queer youth tobacco use. Fureigh records for KBOO.

KBOO's QueerBOO collective hosted Breathe Free on two occasions in November. First, R.E. was interviewed on *Out Loud* about LGBTQ tobacco use, Breathe Free, and our plans for the Gay American Smoke Out.

Just Out, our statewide free paper that serves the LGBTQ communities, also included information about the Smoke Out. Notably, *Just Out* does not accept funding from tobacco companies. Next time you read, take note of how

you don't see tobacco advertising!

In addition, members from the QueerBOO collective showed up at Gay American Smoke Out and produced a live broadcast via cell phone.

People interviewed during the live broadcast who spoke out against LGBTQ tobacco use included:

- Rosebud XXIX Jinkx M. Dubois from The Escape Night Club
- Cathryn Cushing, Ore-



Cathryn Cushing speaks live to KBOO's Out Loud listeners.

Smoking Rates for Oregon's Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Communities Nearly Double General Population's Rates

Smoking rates in LGB communities underscore importance of November's Gay American Smoke Out cessation and prevention outreach

Portland, Ore. – Breathe Free, the Oregon LGBTQ coalition against tobacco, announced today the results of a new study showing that more than 38.5 percent of the state's lesbians, gays and bisexuals (LGB) smoke. This figure is nearly double the current state average smoking rate of 19.9 percent, as reported by the Oregon Department of Human Services.

"Across the country and certainly here in Oregon, smoking rates for LGB communities are consistently higher than smoking rates of the general population," said Mel Kohn, M.D., state epidemiologist in DHS. "Oregon began tracking LGB smoking rates in 2003 to begin the important work of reversing this trend."

The new data shows that adult lesbian women smoke at a rate of 34.3 percent compared to 17.9 percent of women within the general population. Among adult gay men it was found that 44.4 percent smoke. This figure is more than twice the smoking rate of all Oregon men who smoke at a rate of 21.4 percent. Not enough respondents identified as "transgender" to provide ade-

quate statistics about tobacco use by transgender people. Additionally, statistics on LGBTQ youth tobacco use throughout Oregon are not available because the Oregon Healthy Teen Survey, which measures youth risk behaviors among 8th and 11th graders, does not ask about the respondent's sexual orientation.

"These high smoking rates translate into increased risk for smoking-related illnesses like cancer, emphysema and heart disease," said R.E. Szego, LGBTQ tobacco prevention coordinator with Breathe Free. "In fact, tobacco kills more people from the LGBTQ communities than hate crimes, alcohol, accidents, suicide and HIV/AIDS combined. The risks of smoking affect not just smokers, but our friends, family and community members."

Szego added that Oregon has not collected enough data on transgender people to know exactly how high the smoking rate is within this population. It can be inferred that transgender people also smoke at exceptionally high rates because of the high stress that they face due to discrimination and violence, limited (if any) healthcare access and high rates of other substance abuse.

"One of the reasons the LGB rates are so high is because

the tobacco industry uses its marketing muscle to openly target LGB communities," said Szego. "The smoking rates reflect the effectiveness of the industry's marketing campaigns. Tobacco marketing exploits the effects of living in a society where we face discrimination due to homophobia and transphobia, such as a sense of alienation and daily life stresses."

"Oregon's consistently high smoking rates for LGB communities demonstrate how critical outreach is in countering the industry's efforts," said Szego. "It is encouraging that so many people are participating in Gay American Smoke Out activities."

###

CORRECTION: After this article was printed in *Just Out*, I learned that, in fact, the state currently collects no data on transgender risk behaviors, which include tobacco use. There is currently no place within the BRFSS to identify one's gender beyond "male" or "female." This information would be useful for advocating for increased funding for education, prevention and healthcare for transgender folks as well as for those who identify as genderqueer or gender variant.

Specifically related to tobacco use, the extremely limited research that has been done

"Across the country and certainly here in Oregon, smoking rates for LGB communities are consistently higher than smoking rates of the general population."

*- Mel Kohn, M.D.,
Epidemiologist,*

Breathe Free.

OREGON LGBTQ COALITION AGAINST TOBACCO

Contact:

R.E. Szego, Program Coordinator
c/o SMYRC
2100 SE Belmont, Portland, OR 97214
Phone: 503.784.5813
Fax: 503.231.3051

Breathe Free provides education and advocacy around LGBTQ tobacco use with the understanding that we are all (tobacco users and non-users) impacted by tobacco use and by being targeted by the tobacco industry. Our goals are:

- To work in coalition with other groups toward smoke-free bars, clubs and other gathering places for LGBTQ folks;
- To promote safe and smoke free places for LGBTQ people to socialize and connect with each other; and
- To advocate that LGBTQ events and organizations not accept funding from tobacco companies.

Breathe Free is funded by the Oregon Department of Human Services as part of the Multicultural Council of programs that provide tobacco prevention education and advocacy within groups who are disproportionately affected by tobacco use and exposure.

*Written and edited
by R.E. Szego, except where*

A PROGRAM OF SMYRC, THE SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER

"2006 does hold promise of being an election year without an anti-gay measure on the ballot. I suggest then that we throw our combined energy and support into backing an initiative to ban smoking in all public and work places in Oregon. A similar law is in effect now in Washington and has been for some time in California. Oregon is historically the leader in progressive legislation. Why are we falling behind in this much-needed legislation—legislation that will have an immediate positive impact on the health and well-being of countless Oregonians? Wouldn't it be great if our gay bars took the lead in going smoke-free, or establishing smoke-free nights prior to legislative mandates? Let's grow together as a community in 2006, not kill ourselves off in smoky bars."

*Marty Davis, Just Out editor
Dec.16, 2005*

Join Us in Planning LGBT Health Awareness Week!

As we move into 2006, Breathe Free is looking forward to working with the State and County Health Departments and local organizations to plan events for LGBT Health Awareness week March 12-18. The National Coalition for LGBT Health promotes activities for this week across the nation—and we want to be included! (Check out www.lgbthealth.net for more information.)

We're interested in your ideas and help planning events!

Would you like to help out in any of the following areas?

- Event planning
- Promotions, such as flier-ing and announcing our plans at other meetings and events
- Representing a co-sponsoring organization
- Volunteering during events
- Other assistance

Please contact R.E. at 503.784.5813 to work with us!