

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Contact:**

Rachael Manning, Health Educator  
715-839-5091  
[rachael.manning@co.eau-claire.wi.us](mailto:rachael.manning@co.eau-claire.wi.us)

**Celebrating 7 years of Smoke-Free Air in Wisconsin**

**EAU CLAIRE, WI, July 5, 2017-** Have you noticed that we're breathing a little easier in Wisconsin? That's because of the landmark legislation that passed in 2010 and the statewide smoke-free air law took effect. The law eliminated indoor smoking in all workplaces including bars and restaurants. For the last seven years, residents have enjoyed healthier environments with cleaner air and businesses continue to thrive with healthier employees and customers.

In addition to cleaner air, the law has also helped re-shape social norms around smoking. Kids aren't seeing what they used to see. People are no longer smoking at work, at restaurants, and at other public places where youth and family socializing is common.



In Eau Claire county, the percentage of youth using tobacco products has decreased from almost 30% in 2001 to 6% in 2015. While the smoke-free air law was a huge win for the state and has helped to lower tobacco use among youth, challenges still remain. Nearly half of high school-age youth in Eau Claire County report that tobacco products are still easy to get. Easy access to tobacco products is one significant factor that contributes to youth use.

"A number of steps to reduce smoking in Wisconsin have been taken, but we still need to prevent youth from starting to use and continue to help current users quit," says Rachael Manning, Health Educator at the Eau Claire City-County Health Department. "Nearly all tobacco use starts during youth or young adulthood, so prevention is critical."

In Eau Claire County, the Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention and the Health Department conduct tobacco age compliance checks through the *WI Wins* program to prevent youth tobacco use. *WI Wins* is part of the state-wide tobacco prevention and control program. This program uses a mix of education and oversight to keep tobacco out of the hands of youth. In addition to compliance checks, other tobacco prevention activities happening in our community include:

- Free retailer training and educational resources – such as [WITobaccoCheck.org](http://WITobaccoCheck.org)
- Community outreach and education
- Strong tobacco-free policies that include e-cigarettes
- Smoke-free building ordinances.



A smoke-free Wisconsin will lower health care costs, save lives, and help keep residents healthier. Wisconsin truly is better with smoke-free air. *Tobacco users who are ready to quit can call the WI tobacco quit line at (1-800-QUIT-NOW) for free and confidential help.*

###