



Vilas County Public Health Department

330 Court Street

Eagle River, WI 54521

715-479-3656 • 866-845-2726 • Fax: 715-479-3741

For Immediate Release: June 20, 2019

Contact: Tammi Boers, Vilas County Public Health Department: 715-479-3757,
taboer@vilascountywi.gov

Tobacco Harms some People More than Others

Did you know that people living below the poverty level smoke cigarettes more than other people? That if you only graduated high school or have less than a high school education, you are also more likely to smoke than those who have some college or graduated from college? These are two factors that are considered part of a person's socioeconomic status.

Socioeconomic status is determined by factors like where you work, education level, amount of income, and where you live. All of these factors play a large role in how healthy a person is. If a person has a low socioeconomic status, meaning they don't have a high paying job or live in a rural area where jobs are hard to find, it can add stress to one's life. This additional stress, such as having more than one job, transportation issues, paying bills, etc., can lead to poor choices to cope, such as tobacco use. It's no wonder that people with low socioeconomic status have higher chances of lung cancer and other tobacco-related health conditions. And if they live in a rural area, where they have to travel far for health care, chances are they will be diagnosed in later stages of diseases and conditions.

Many people who do not have health insurance coverage or ways to pay for resources to quit tobacco use are less likely to have the support they need. There is free help available through the Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT NOW (784-8669) or <https://ctri.wisc.edu/quit-line>. People who are enrolled in Medicaid can also talk to their healthcare provider about the free services offered through the Medicaid Cessation Benefit.

For more on local tobacco prevention and control efforts, contact Tammi Boers, Community Health Coordinator, Vilas County Public Health Department, 715-479-3757.

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