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Student smoking rate drops, but a third of young adults smoke

From Staff Reports

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CHAPEL HILL --

Cigarette use by North Carolina high school and middle school students has significantly decreased since the state began financing tobacco-use prevention and cessation initiatives for teens in 2003, according to UNC-Chapel Hill researchers.

Cigarette use dropped 30.4 percent among high school students between 2003 and 2007, compared with a decline of 13.6 percent between 1999 and 2003, according to a report released Tuesday. The decrease appears strongly related to the statewide prevention and cessation initiatives, the researchers said.

The report also notes that nearly a third of young adults ages 18 to 24 still smoke in North Carolina and that the rate is higher among those who aren't in college.

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The N.C. Health and Wellness Trust Fund spends \$17 million a year on tobacco-use prevention and cessation programs aimed at teens and college students. The fund was established with North Carolina's share of tobacco lawsuit settlement money.

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