

**DATE:** March 13, 2013

**TO:** Washington State Board of Health Members

**FROM:** Stephen Kutz

**SUBJECT:** BRIEFING - YOUTH TOBACCO USE

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**Background and Summary:**

At our January 2013 meeting, Secretary Selecky reported that illegal tobacco sales to minors have climbed to the highest level for a decade in Washington. At the same time, according to the Department of Health's *2011 Progress Report on Tobacco Prevention and Control*, progress in reducing the number of youth who smoke has stalled. The percentage of youth who smoke changed very little between 2004 and 2010. About 70,000 Washington youth still smoke, and about 50 kids start smoking every day. Smoking is harmful in a number of ways, young teens who start smoking are more likely to get addicted to nicotine, become lifetime smokers, and get sick and die from diseases caused by tobacco use.

Paul Davis, Tobacco Prevention and Control Program Manager, will talk about youth tobacco rates, the health benefits of preventing youth from taking up tobacco, and what the department is doing to address the issue. This will be followed by a panel representing the Office of the Attorney General, Pierce County – Anti-Tobacco Coalition, Washington State Liquor Control Board, and Thurston County Sheriff's Office who will talk about what their organizations are doing to address youth tobacco use, and their recommendations to best address the issue.

**Recommended Board Action:**

None

**Staff Contact:**

Tara Wolff