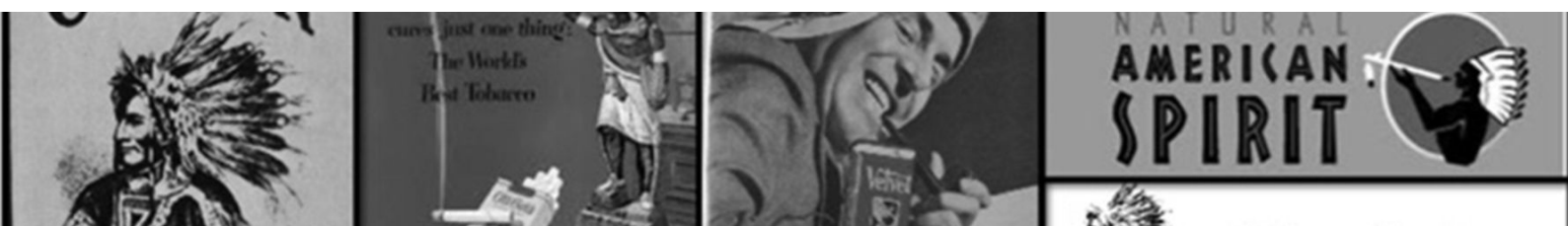




Tobacco Industry Targets American Indians

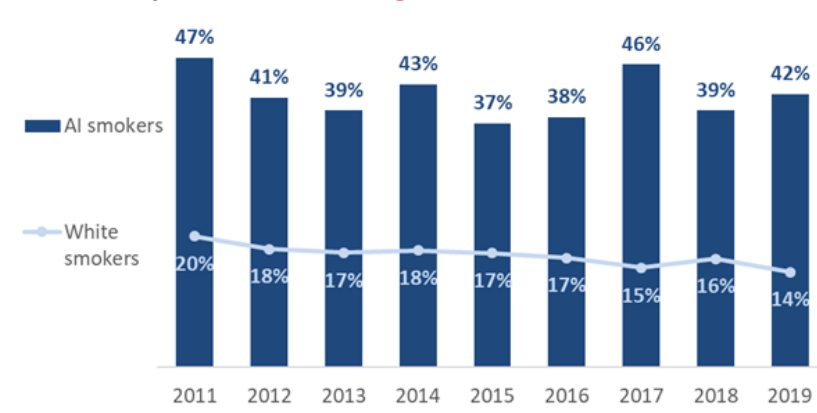


Although tobacco has cultural significance, romanticized images of American Indians and Alaska Natives have been used for decades to market and sell commercial tobacco products in order to portray them as natural and a spiritual experience. (1)

Smoking remains a major risk factor for two leading causes of death among Montana American Indians; cancer & heart disease.

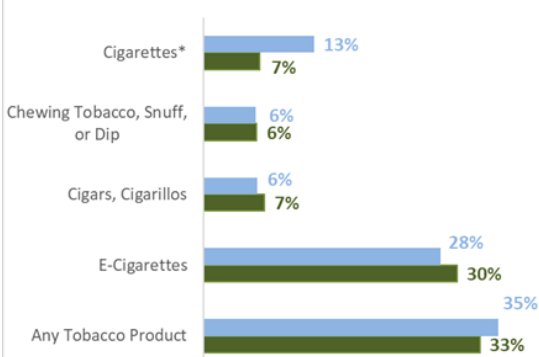
Montana Office of Vital Statistics, 2016

The percent of adult American Indian cigarette smokers in Montana is consistently **two to three times higher** than white smokers.



The tobacco industry has a well-documented history of targeting minority and marginalized populations, including American Indians and Alaska Natives. (2) Targeted marketing and advertisements can be directly linked to tobacco use. (3)

Current use of tobacco products among **American Indian** youth compared to **White** youth in Montana, 2019

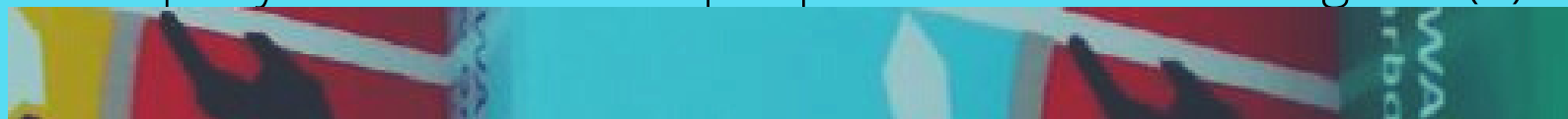


* Indicates a significant difference
Data Source: 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Montana's American Indian youth are closing the disparity gap when it comes to overall tobacco use. However, cigarette use remains twice as high. Cigarettes are the norm. "When our practices were outlawed, picking tobacco in certain territories was restricted. The use of commercial tobacco made its way into the lives and ceremonies that way."

- Diana Bigby, Nakoda Tobacco Prevention Specialist

Research conducted by industry competitors found that the use of American Indian imagery by Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company served to "bond people with America's origins". (4)



"In my 22 years of working in commercial tobacco prevention, it still shocks me when corporate companies exploit American Indians. To sell their deadly products American Spirit states: 'If Native Americans can overlook, or at least tolerate, the unsolicited connection to their culture that these branding schemes inaccurately imply, techniques such as these are likely to increase sales'."

- Charleena Penama, Salish

SOURCES:

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