

Smoking Ban Coming to More NJ Colleges?

By: [Dino Flammia](#) | 9 hours ago

More than 700 colleges nationwide are 100% smoke-free, meaning “lighting up” is not allowed anywhere on campus. Most of them also feature a ban on any tobacco products.

Eliminating tobacco use on every college campus across the country is the target of a fresh initiative from the federal government. Howard Koh, assistant secretary at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, speaks today at the University of Michigan about the nationwide push.

According to [a report](#) this year from the Surgeon General, almost 90% of new smokers take their first puff by age 18.

“Prevention efforts must focus on young adults too,” the report noted.

According to [New Jersey GASP](#), at least 14 New Jersey colleges feature either a complete ban on cigarettes or all tobacco products. Berkeley College and Essex County College were the most recent schools to enact a ban. Nearly all of New Jersey’s list is comprised of two-year institutions.

“The reason for smoke and tobacco-free campuses is that it’s good policy. It helps people’s health,” said GASP Program Manager Alan Kantz.

While Kantz would not reveal school names, he said there are some traditional four-year universities in New Jersey currently considering a smoke or tobacco-free policy. More than half of the state’s colleges and universities already have some type of outdoor smoking policy (designating specific “smoking areas” or prohibiting tobacco use at the entrances and exits of buildings).

New Jersey has been no stranger to smoking bans. Beyond state laws that do not allow smoking indoors at most public places and workplaces, NJ GASP says many business owners have voluntarily instituted 100% smoke-free outdoor policies. At least 100 hospital campuses in New Jersey prohibit smoking anywhere outdoors, and smoking is not allowed in the outdoor seating or pedestrian areas at the Meadowlands. In Seaside Park, attraction visitors must find a parking lot or nearby street if they want to light a cigarette.

In 2006, the [New Jersey Smoke-Free Air Act](#) also prohibited smoking outdoors on all public and private K-12 school grounds.

Kantz said given the K-12 ban, keeping an identical policy in place at colleges could keep New Jersey youth from ever developing the habit.

“Colleges are a place where people learn a lot of things that affect the rest of their lives,” Kantz added.

Kantz said health advocates in other states, like Montana, have experienced strong resistance when attempting to implement a smoking ban on campus. However, for the most part, Kantz said opposition fades once the ban is in place.