National and state smoking cessation programs have been successful at decreasing smoking prevalence in the United States (U.S.) and California. However, smoking prevalence continues to be a national and state public health issue, with 1,300 deaths a day in the U.S. attributed to smoking and California being the state with the highest amount of adult smokers. The rate of smoking varies by race/ethnicity in California with higher rates among American Indians/Alaska Natives and African Americans/Blacks and lower rates among Hispanics and Asians/Pacific Islanders.

Smoking is a risk factor for various chronic diseases, heart disease, and lung cancer; however, quitting can mediate and, in some cases, eliminate these health risks. African Americans/Blacks have reported higher rates of wanting to quit than other groups. Those who are able to quit smoking before age 40 decrease their risk of dying from smoking-related diseases by 90%.

For Medi-Cal adults, rates were higher for thinking about quitting in the next six months than making a quit attempt. Also, African Americans/Blacks reported the highest rates of thinking about quitting both in Medi-Cal and California in general. There were not enough people in the Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander group to report their rates (see figure).

Figure

Thinking about Quitting Smoking and Quit Attempts of Medi-Cal population, by Race/Ethnicity, 2014 to 2018

Source: AskCHIS, California Helath Interview Survey, 2017-18
* - Statistically unstable