



# Community-Based Interventions for Smokers: The COMMIT Field Experience: Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph No. 6

*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute*

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The first great “public health revolution” in developed countries involved measures to control infectious disease, and now we are in the midst of the second revolution: the massive attack on chronic disease. In this revolution, the dramatic decline in cigarette smoking in the United States since 1964 stands out as the most striking success story, which is especially remarkable considering the fact that antismoking advocates play the part of David against the Goliath of the tobacco industry. Anti-tobacco forces, including public advocacy groups, have made steady advances in controlling the smoking epidemic despite the tobacco industry’s greater expenditures to expand tobacco use. The industry’s counterattacks continue with steadily increasing intensity; this points to a clear need to increase the scope and effectiveness of all existing educational and regulatory anti-tobacco strategies. This monograph on the Community Intervention Trial for Smoking Cessation (COMMIT) field experience meets this need extraordinarily well because organizing, activating, and empowering communities to take action against smoking surely stands as the most important strategy for use in public health campaigns that emphasize control of tobacco use. This monograph, Community-Based Interventions for Smokers: The COMMIT Field Experience, is one of an excellent series on various aspects of tobacco and health published since 1991 by the National Cancer Institute and the first to deal with community-based approaches. It reports exciting victories: (1) a modest decrease in smoking rates in light-to-moderate smokers, especially in the hard-to-reach categories of individuals of low educational attainment and (2) an impressive accomplishment in community empowerment.

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