



# Creating A Tobacco-free Workplace

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**INTRODUCTION:** Cancer is the leading cause of death in Alaska. 42% of cancer deaths are attributed to tobacco use. Lung cancer has been the leading cause of cancer death among Alaska Native people since 1997. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and Southcentral Foundation (SCF) decided to implement a tobacco-free policy at each company and the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) in 2004.

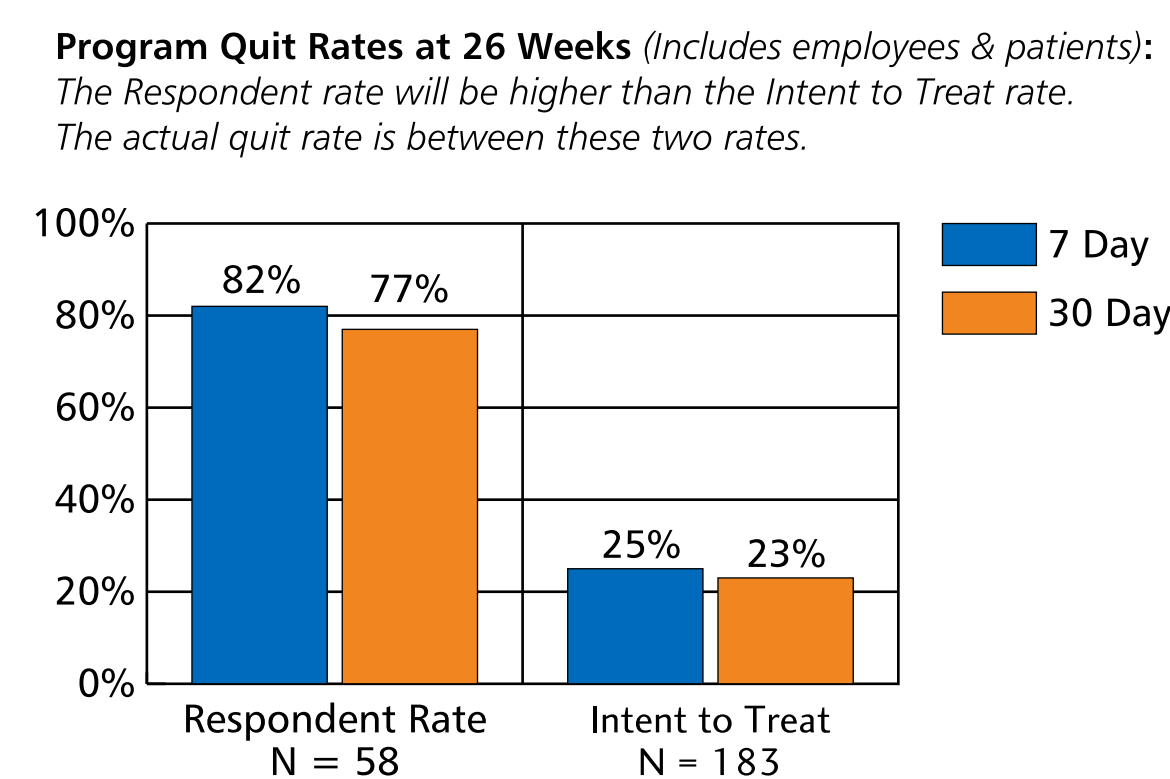
ANTHC is the largest tribal self-governance entity in the United States with approximately 1,800 employees. ANTHC's Board of Directors represents 229 tribes and 39 tribal health organizations.

The intent of the tobacco-free policy is to provide a safe and supportive environment for the workforce and patients consistent with the mission, vision and values of ANTHC.

**METHODS:** Development and implementation of the tobacco-free workplace policy was a multi year process. (See timeline). A committee including representatives from ANTHC, SCF, Indian Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Arctic Investigations Unit worked together to implement the policy.

**RESULTS:** Cessation and clinical system impacts from the tobacco-free policy:

- Medical providers are trained in the assessment and referral process for patients.
- Between September 1, 2006 and July 10, 2007, 49 ANTHC employees enrolled in the cessation program at ANMC. Total program enrollment is 183.



**CONCLUSIONS:** Tobacco-free policy implementation has affected workforce and patients. Changing expectations and norms and behaviors of those at our worksites is an ongoing process. Overall our workforce understands and supports the tobacco-free policy. Occurrences of smoking on the property have decreased significantly. Based on formal and informal reports there is limited opposition to the tobacco-free policy.

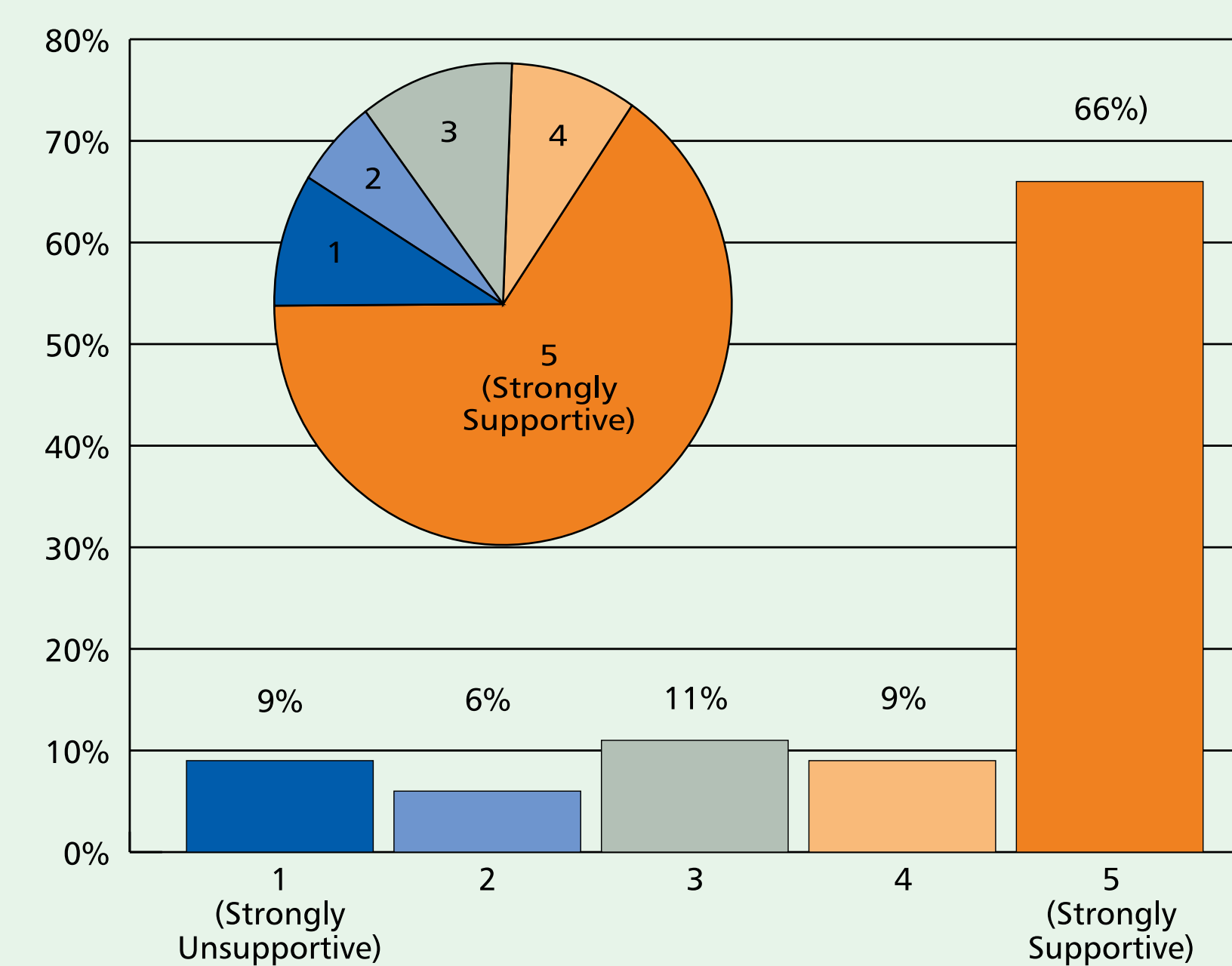
No employees have resigned or have been terminated due to the policy. Cessation services are offered and utilized by the workforce.

Tobacco-free policy implementation on health campuses is a growing trend in Alaska. Prior to ANTHC and SCF becoming tobacco-free two other Alaskan hospital campuses had implemented tobacco-free policy (Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium and Central Peninsula General Hospital both in 2005). Five Anchorage area healthcare facilities plan tobacco-free policy implementation by November 15, 2008. More than ten tribal and non tribal organizations statewide have requested ANTHC to assist their efforts to become tobacco-free campuses. ANTHC's policy implementation is a catalyst for other policy and implementation efforts and we will support these efforts statewide.

## Employee Attitudes and Tobacco Use Observations:

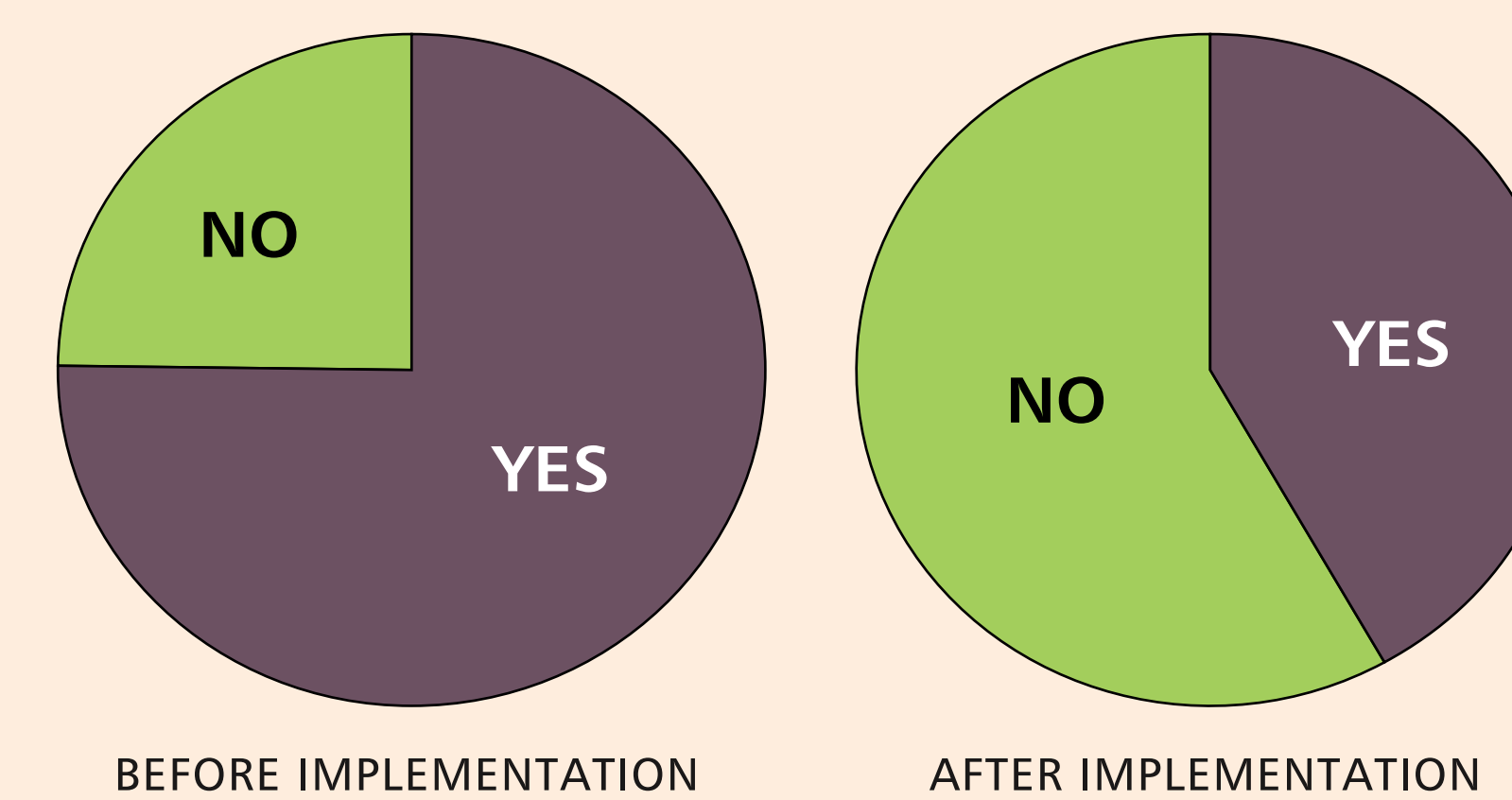
Attitudes, perceptions and feedback about the tobacco-free policy are based on a July 2007 ANTHC and SCF workforce questionnaire given to 1477 employees and patients.

**Do you support the tobacco-free campus policy?**



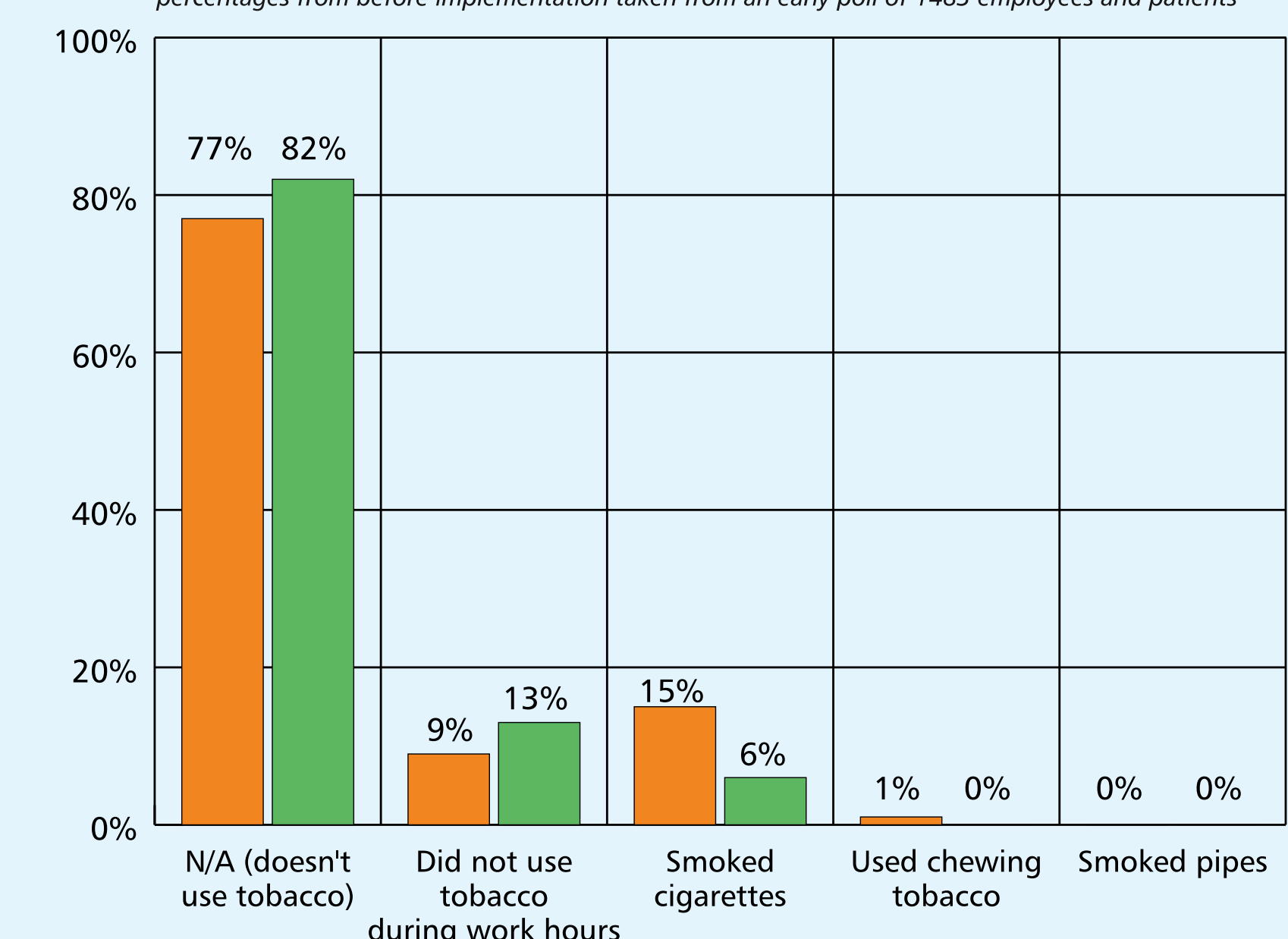
**Continuum of Support for the Tobacco-Free Policy**  
 Percentage of people questioned as to how they support the tobacco-free campus.

**Are you ever exposed to second-hand smoke during work hours?**



**Employees' Self Report of Secondhand Smoke Exposure During Work Hours:** Employees' exposure to secondhand smoke has dropped since the implementation of the tobacco-free policy

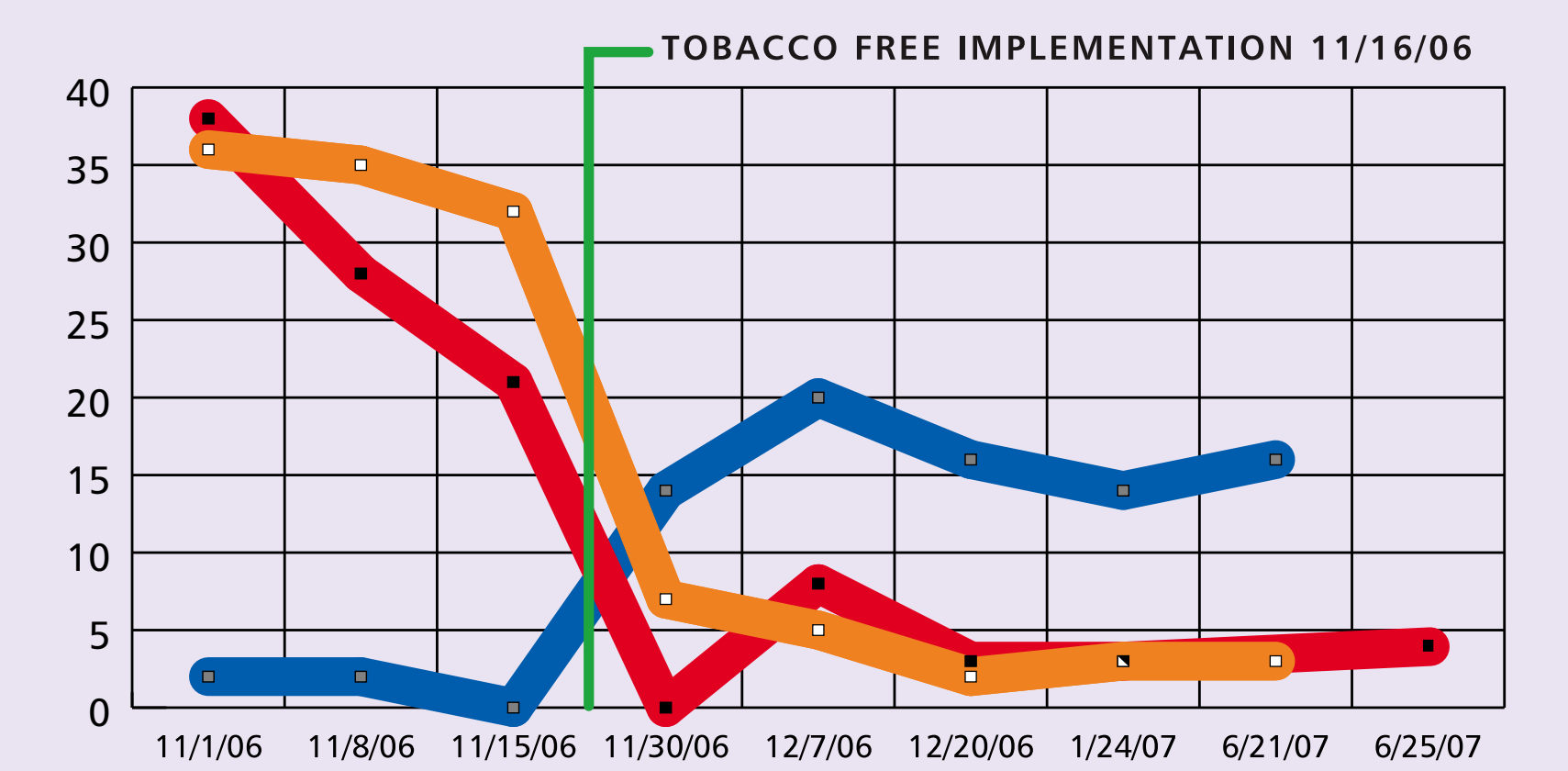
**Do you use tobacco during work hours?**



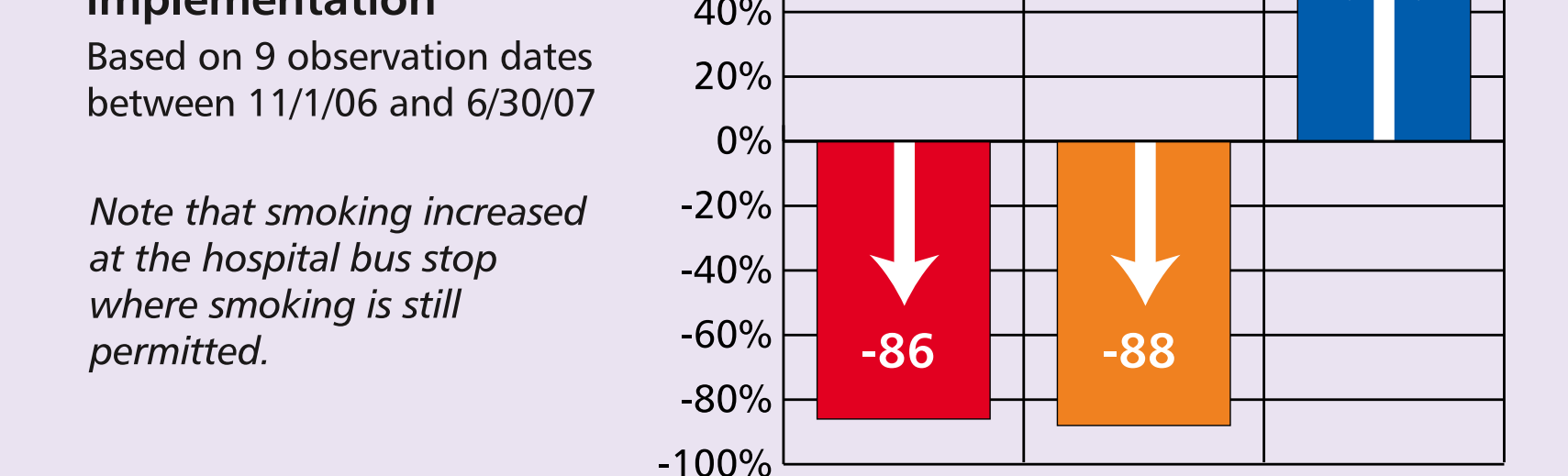
**Employees' Self Report of Tobacco Use and Products During Work Hours:** Employees are smoking less during work hours since the tobacco-free policy implementation. Also of note, smoking employees do not appear to be switching to chewing tobacco.

**Observations of tobacco use at three locations on the Alaska Tribal Health Campus:**

Number of smokers observed before and after tobacco-free policy implementation



**Change in number of smokers observed before and after implementation**



Note that smoking increased at the hospital bus stop where smoking is still permitted.



**How has the tobacco policy improved people's health?**

*"It has provided a healthier, more smoke free environment, but it has also been a great incentive for those wanting to quit and needing additional encouragement."*

- Terry Raymer, Director of the Alaska Area Diabetes Program



**How has the tobacco policy improved people's health?**

*"It is a very effective approach to dealing with the adverse effects of tobacco and its secondary repercussions on nonsmokers as well."*

- Kathy Humphrey, Document Imaging Clerk



**How has the tobacco policy improved people's health?**

*"I feel great when walking outside knowing that I don't have to dodge areas of the campus or employees. I am three years smoke free. Not seeing this habit helps me to maintain not smoking."*

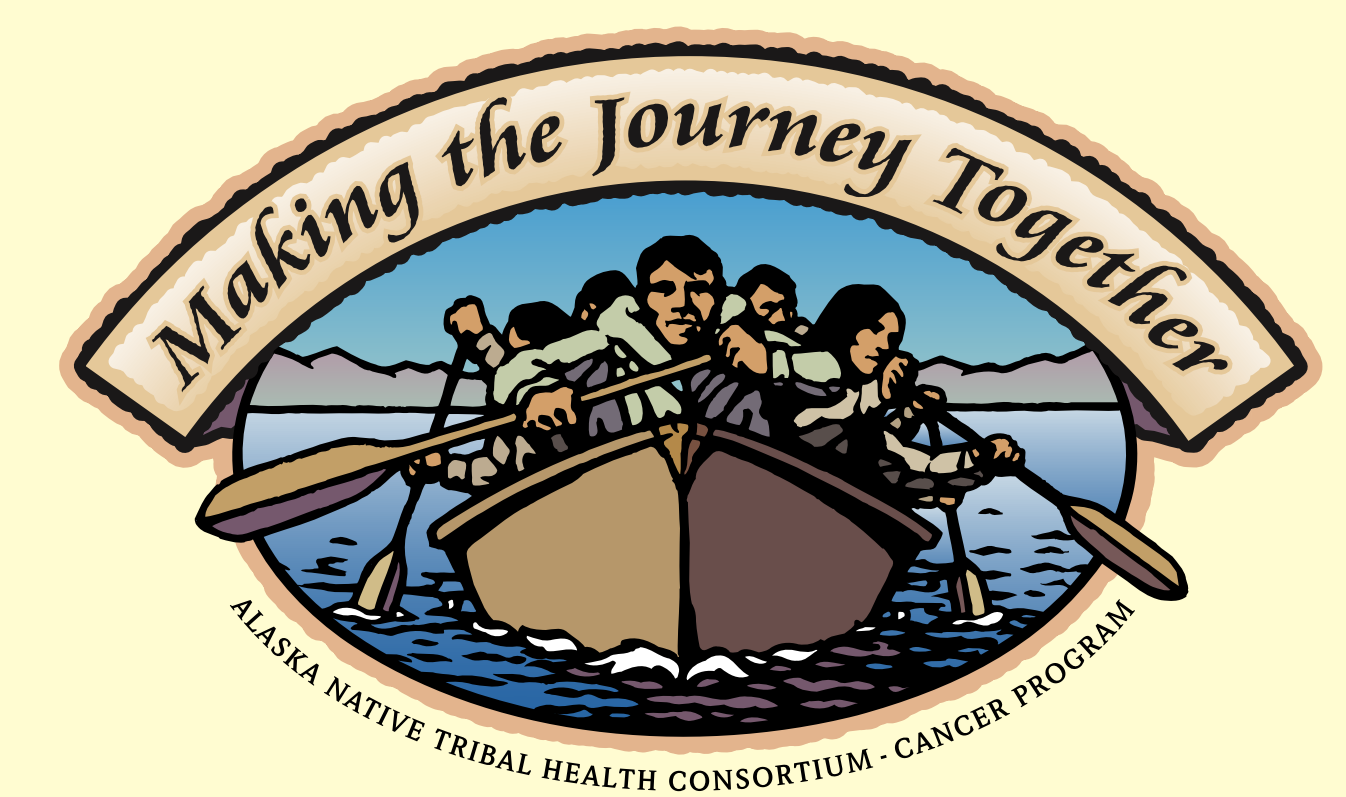
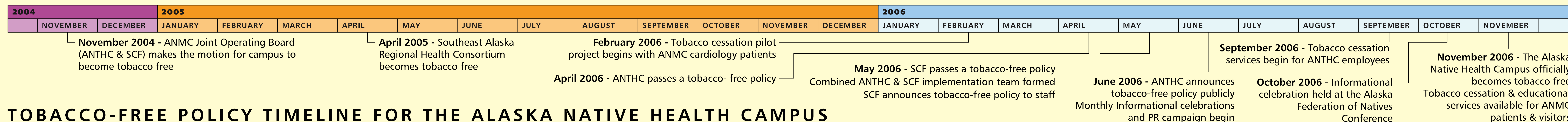
- Vicky Hiner, Associate Information Technology Operations Center Analyst



**How has the tobacco policy improved people's health?**

*"It has improved people's health by limiting the cigarettes people smoke during the day and by making people aware of the health risks and effects of secondhand smoke."*

- Keila Baker, Administrative Support



### TOBACCO-FREE POLICY TIMELINE FOR THE ALASKA NATIVE HEALTH CAMPUS