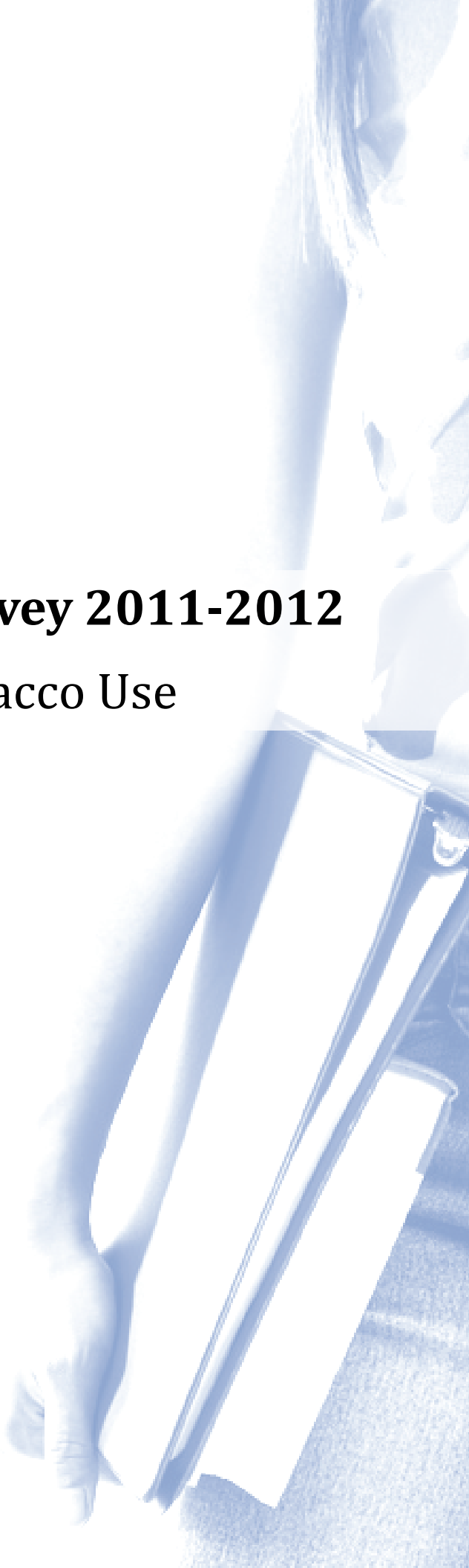
# Kansas Youth Tobacco Survey 2011-2012

## Trends in Youth Tobacco Use



# BACKGROUND

The Kansas Youth Tobacco Survey (**YTS**) contains in-depth information on youth use of tobacco products, knowledge/beliefs of the impact of tobacco use, attitudes surrounding tobacco and exposure to secondhand smoke. It is a statewide survey of students in grades 6-8 (Middle School/**MS**) and 9-12 (High School/**HS**) conducted every two years by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment in partnership with the Kansas Department of Education. The results are used in program evaluation as well as in program planning by organizations across the state.

This document contains information on time trends in tobacco use among Kansas youth. Kansas Youth Risk Behavior Survey (**YRBS**) results are presented alongside Kansas YTS and national YRBS results to better describe state trends in youth tobacco use and compare Kansas to what is happening nationally. The Kansas YRBS measures a limited number of core tobacco use indicators, is only administered to high school students and is conducted on alternate years than the Kansas YTS.

To be included in this report, indicators must be measured the same way several years in a row by different surveys. Consequently, this report is limited to the following measures (table 1).

**Table 1.**

| | Current Use* | | Ever Use | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **YRBS** | **YTS** | **YRBS** | **YTS** |
| **Cigarette Smoking** | X | X | X | X |
| **Smokeless Tobacco** | X | X | - | X |
| **Cigar Smoking** | X | X | - | X |
| **Any Tobacco Use**** | X | X | - | X |

*Current use of any tobacco product for youth is defined as having used the product on at least one day in the past 30 days.
**Any tobacco use is defined differently by YRBS and YTS. YRBS includes cigarettes, cigars and smokeless tobacco, while YTS includes pipe tobacco, bidis and kreteks in addition to YRBS products.

# CIGARETTE SMOKING

There has been a downward trend in high school student smoking in Kansas and nationally since 2000. In 2000, about 1 in 4 Kansas high school students (26.1%, 95% CI: ±3.7%) reported smoking cigarettes on at least one day in the past 30 days. Since 2000, the percent of Kansas high school students who are current smokers has been halved to about 1 in 8 students, or 13.0 percent (95% CI: ±3.2%) in 2012. Kansas estimates of high school smoking are generally lower than national estimates, but appear to follow a similar downward pattern. There also appears to be fewer middle school students who currently smoke than in 2000 when 8.1 percent (95% CI: ±2.0%) , or about 1 in 12 middle school students, reported smoking cigarettes on at least one day in the past 30 days. In 2012, the estimate is significantly lower at 2.6 percent (95% CI: ±1.4%) of middle school students, though whether this represents a consistent downward trend over time is debatable (figure 1).

The percent of students who have ever tried cigarette smoking, even once, demonstrates more steady decreases over time than current smoking, which seems to fluctuate. In 2000, more than half (60.4%, 95% CI: ±5.1%) of Kansas high school students reported having tried smoking cigarettes. This percentage has fallen drastically in the intervening years to 36.4 percent (95% CI: ±4.9%) in 2012, or a little more than 1 in 3 Kansas high school students. National estimates of high school students who have tried cigarette smoking, although consistently higher than Kansas, appear to follow a similar downward trend toward reduced experimentation with cigarettes. Kansas middle school students also appear to be trying cigarette smoking less than they did in 2000 when more than 1 in 4 (28.6%, 95% CI: ±5.0%) reported having tried smoking cigarettes. In 2012, the percent of middle school students who have tried smoking cigarettes has fallen dramatically to 11.3 percent (95% CI: ±3.0%) (figure 2).

**Figure 1. Current Cigarette Smoking Among Kansas and United States Youth, 2000-2012**

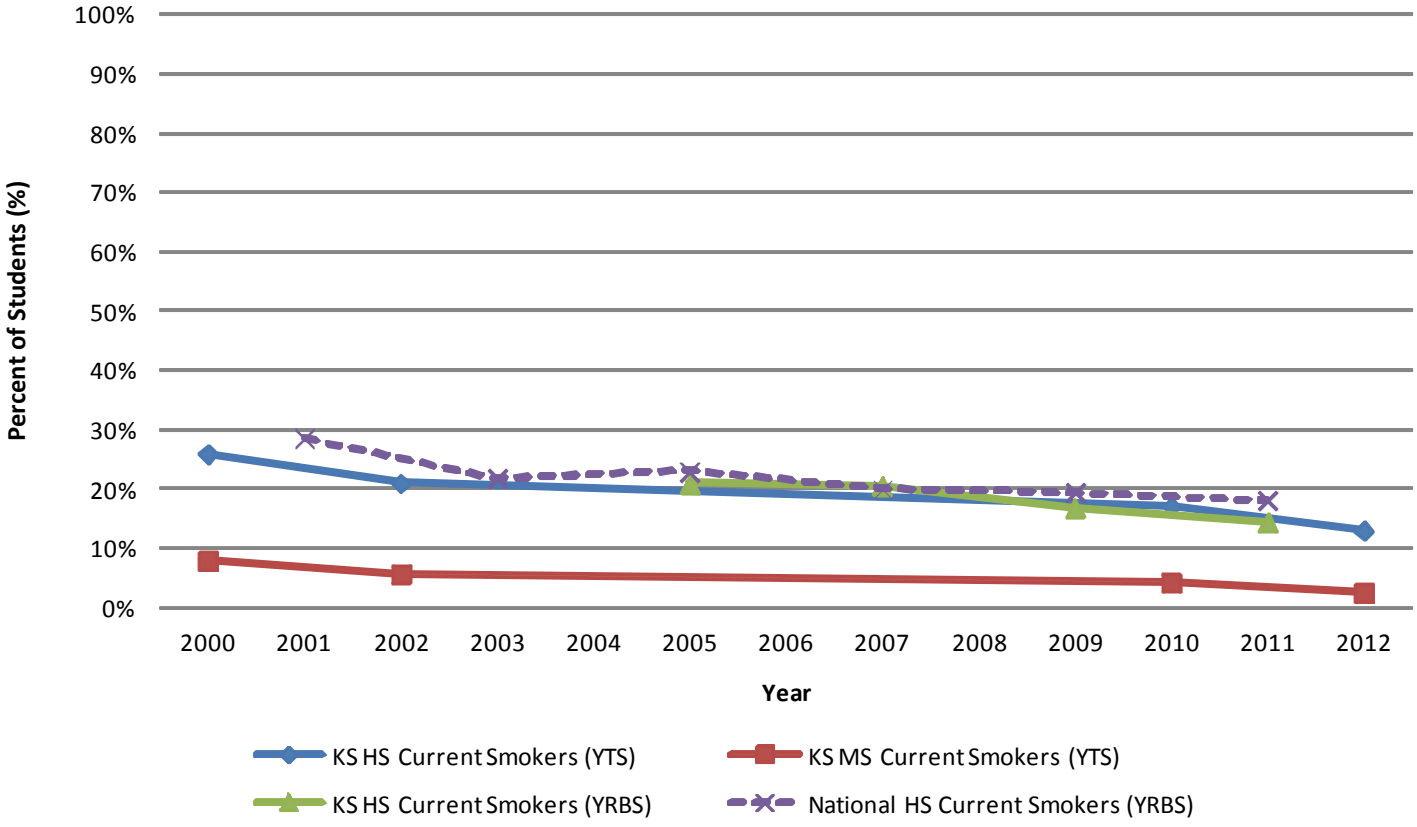
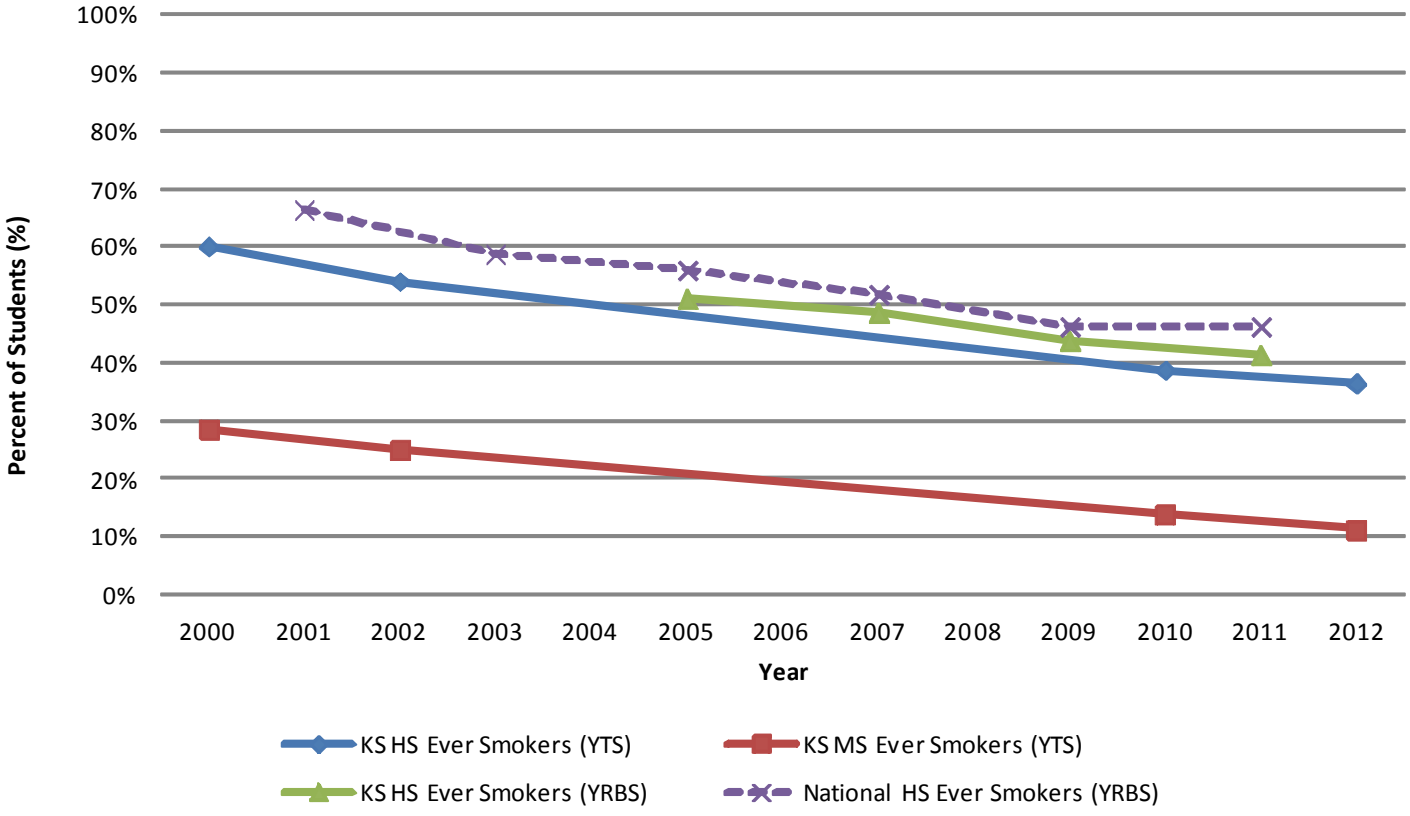



**Figure 2. Percent of Kansas and United States Youth Who Have Ever Tried Cigarette Smoking, 2000-2012**



# SMOKELESS TOBACCO USE

On the YTS and YRBS, smokeless tobacco covers a broad range of traditional tobacco products including snuff, dip and chew. It does not include emerging smokeless tobacco products such as snus or dissolvable tobacco. These types of products were not widely available until recent years, so there is limited surveillance information on their use. Smokeless tobacco is mostly consumed by males, so the following figures exclude female responses.

There does not appear to be a consistent increasing or decreasing trend in male Kansas youth smokeless tobacco use between 2000 and 2012. Although there appears to be a decrease in the percent of male Kansas high school students who currently use smokeless tobacco between 2010 and 2012 on the YTS, the decrease is not statistically significant (in 2000 it was 15.2%, 95% CI: ±4.0%, and in 2012 it was 11.1%, 95% CI: ±3.8%). Male Kansas high school smokeless tobacco use has hovered around 15 percent since 2000. Male Kansas middle school students who currently use smokeless tobacco has also not changed significantly since 2000, fluctuating between 3 and 4 percent (figure 3).

Perhaps the only consistent decline concerning smokeless tobacco can be found in male Kansas high school students who have ever tried smokeless tobacco. In 2000, 37.5 percent (95% CI: ±5.9%) of male Kansas high school students said they had tried smokeless tobacco. This indicator declined significantly in 2012, decreasing to 22.6 percent (95% CI: ±4.9%) . There was no commensurate significant decrease in the percent of male Kansas middle school students who have tried smokeless tobacco. The percent of male middle school students who have experimented with smokeless tobacco has fluctuated between 13.8 percent (95% CI: ±3.8%) in 2000 and 8.1 percent (95% CI: ±3.7%) in 2010 (figure 4).

**Figure 3. Current Smokeless Tobacco Use Among Male Kansas and United States Youth, 2000-2012**

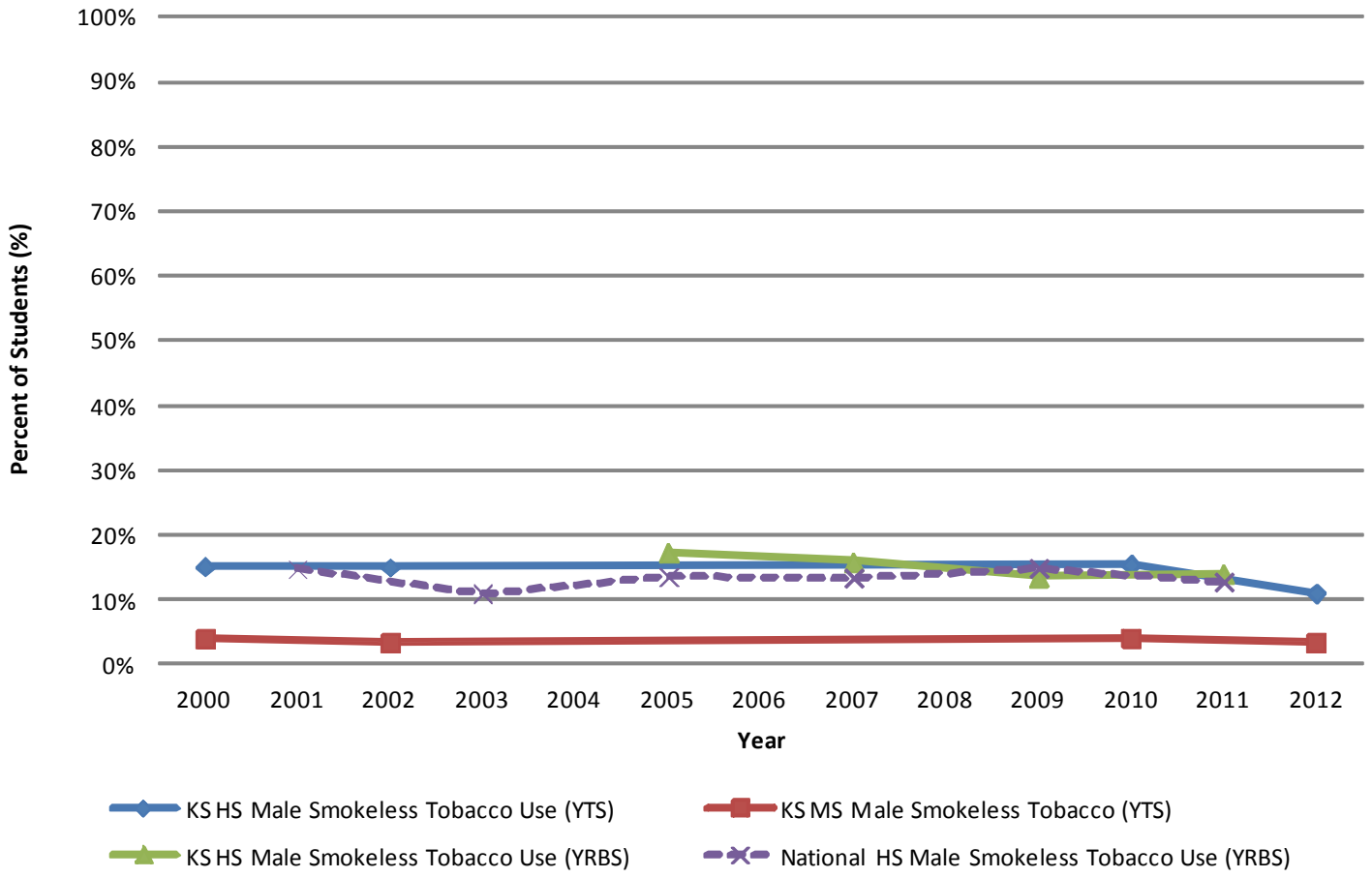
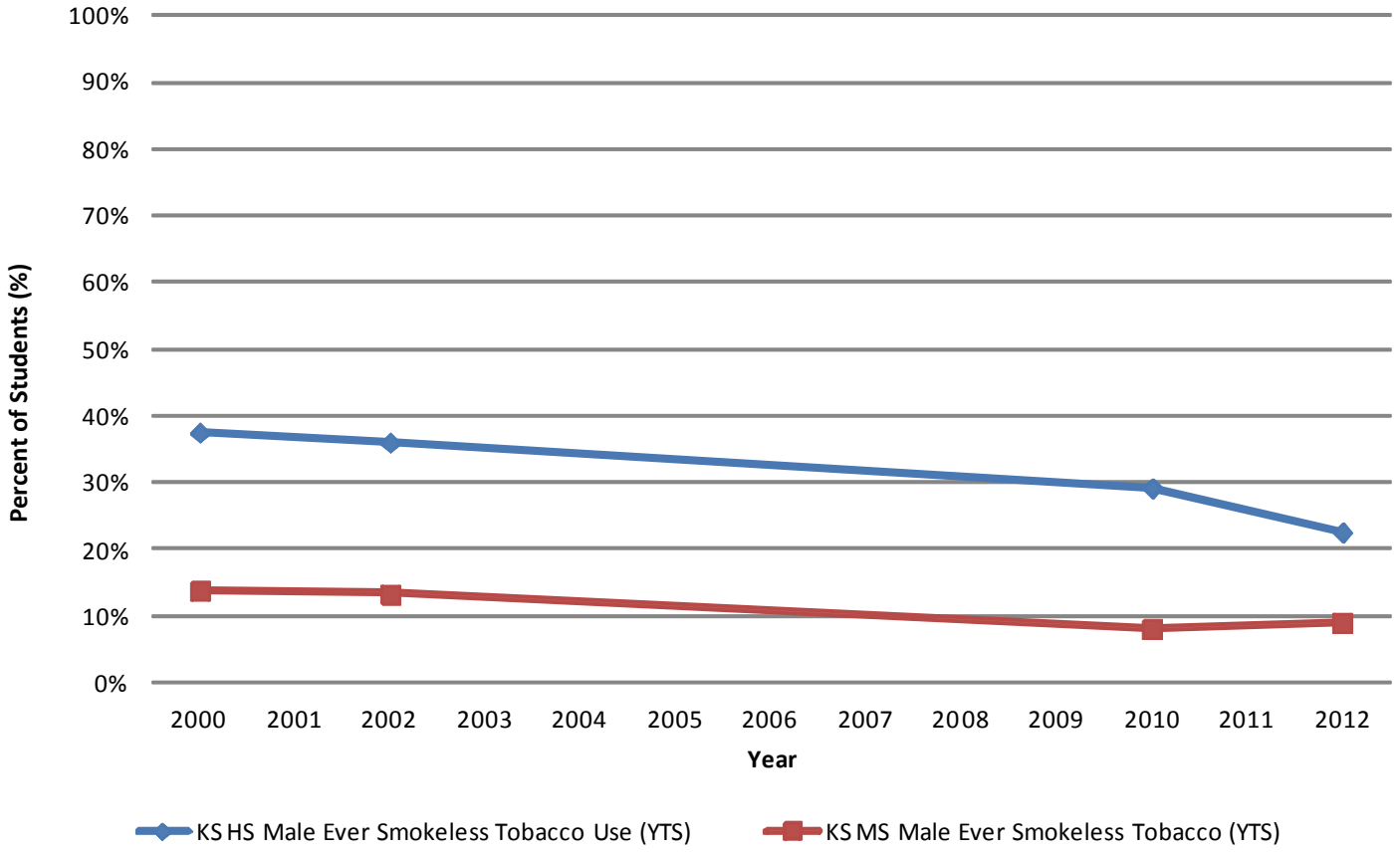


**Figure 4. Percent of Male Kansas Youth Who Have Ever Tried Smokeless Tobacco, 2000-2012**




# CIGAR SMOKING

The cigar product category includes cigars, cigarillos and little cigars. Unfortunately, cigar smoking is sometimes overlooked in favor of cigarette smoking indicators. Cigar smoking, however, is just as hazardous to one's health as cigarette smoking and, with recent reductions in cigarette smoking, has become just as common among some youth. There is also evidence that cigar smoking is underreported by youth on school-based surveys[1]. This may be due to the fact that many cigars look like cigarettes.

The 2012 estimate of current cigar smoking by Kansas high school students of 9.5 percent (95% CI: ±1.9%) is significantly lower than the 2000 figure of 14.8 percent (95% CI: ±3.1%). There is a similar reduction in the percent of Kansas middle school students who are current cigar smokers, falling from a high of 5.1 percent (95% CI: ±1.8%) in 2000 to a record low of 0.8 percent (95% CI: ±0.7%) in 2012. Time will tell whether these reductions are sustained into the future (figure 5).

The percent of Kansas youth who have ever tried cigars shows more consistent, linear reductions in experimentation. Between 2000 and 2012 the percent of Kansas high school students who have ever tried cigars fell from 42.8 percent (95% CI: ±5.9%) to 24.9 percent (95% CI: ±3.8%). The percent of Kansas middle school students who have tried cigars also dropped significantly, from 16.2 percent (95% CI: ±3.7%) in 2000 to 6.8 percent (95% CI: ±1.4%) in 2012 (figure 6).

1. Nasim A, Blank MD, Berry BM, Eissenberg T. Cigar use misreporting among youth: data from the 2009 Youth Tobacco Survey. Prev Chronic Dis 2012;9:110084. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd9.110084.

**Figure 5. Current Cigar Smoking Among Kansas and United States Youth, 2000-2012**

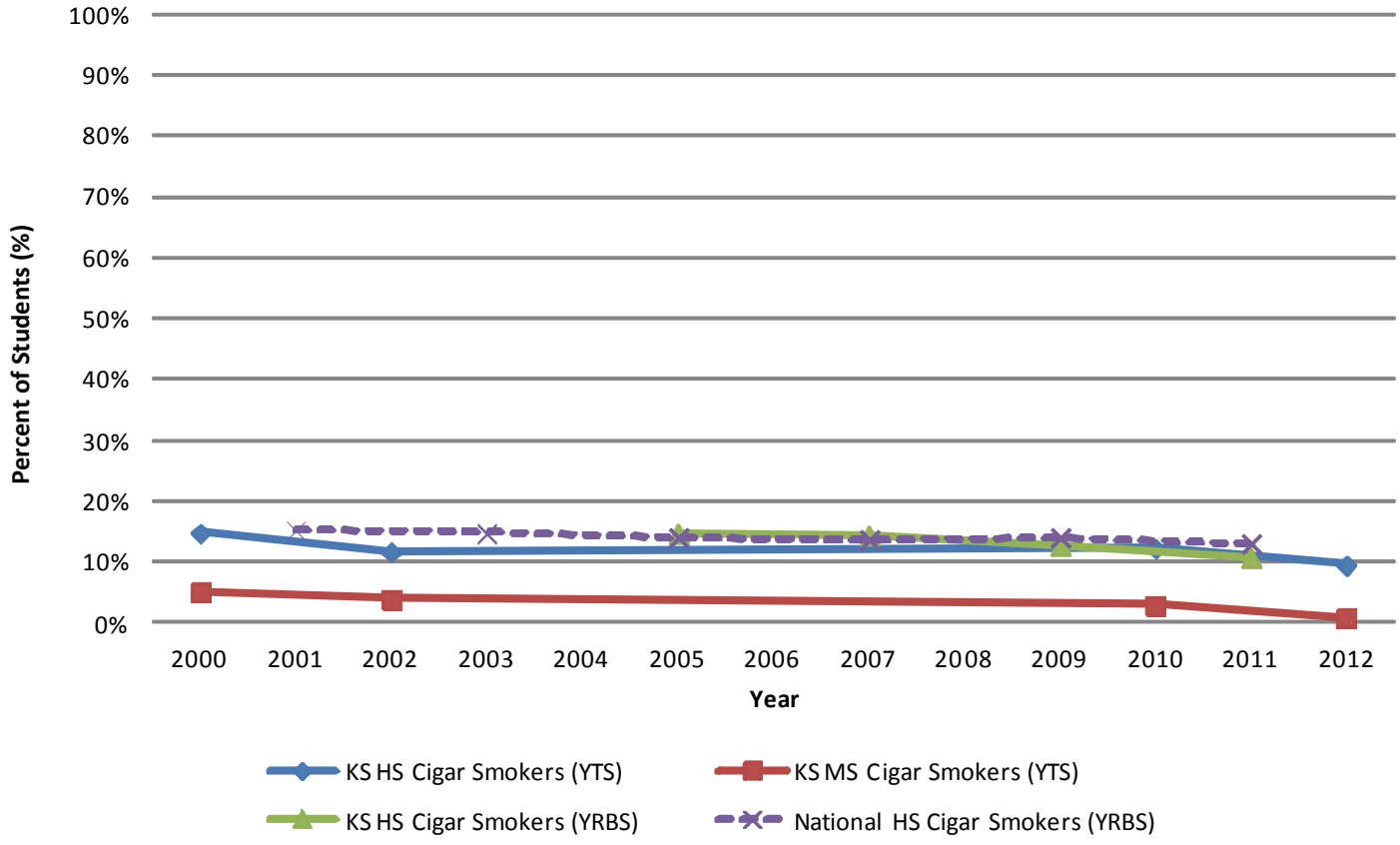
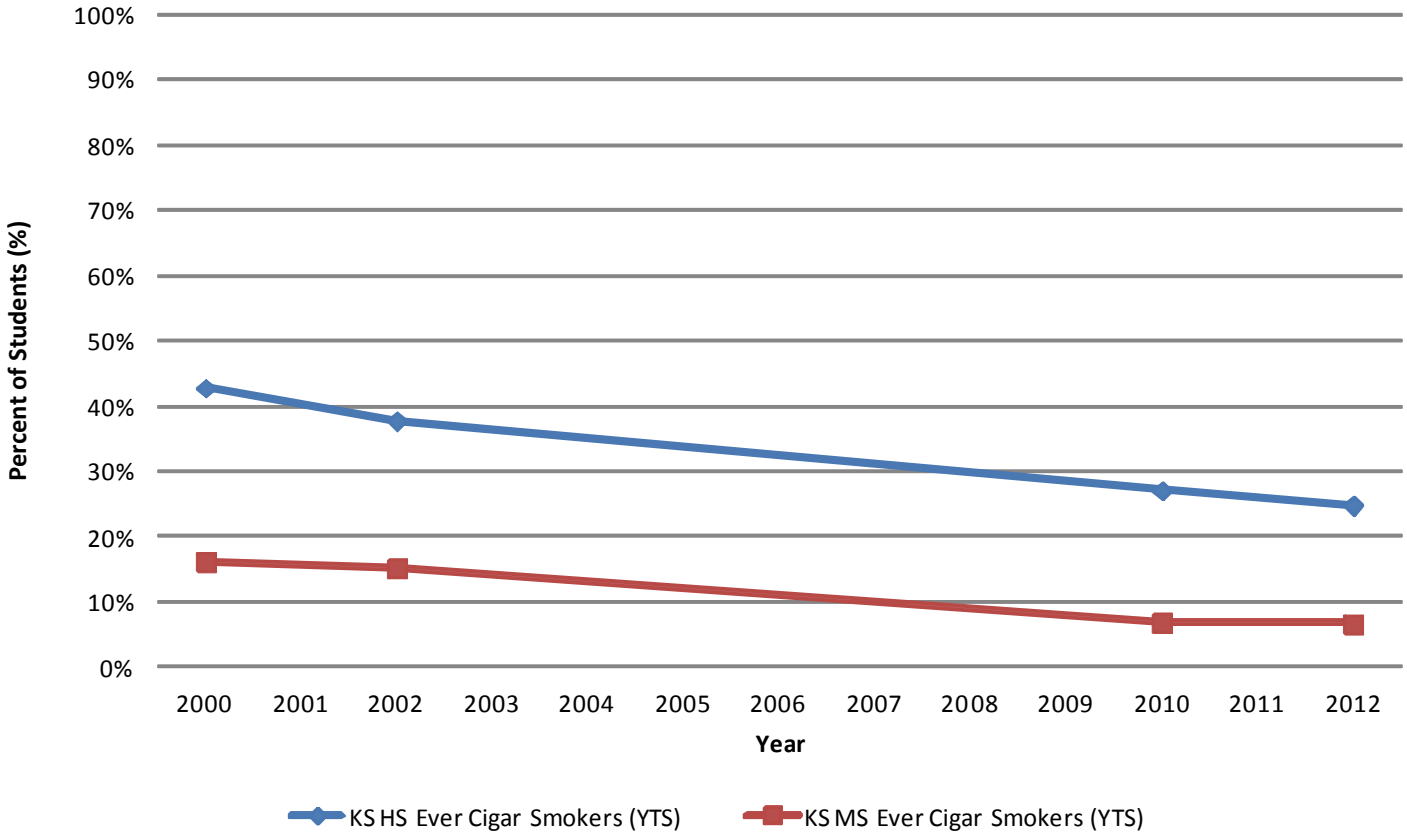



**Figure 6. Percent of Kansas Youth Who Ever Tried Smoking Cigars, 2000-2012**



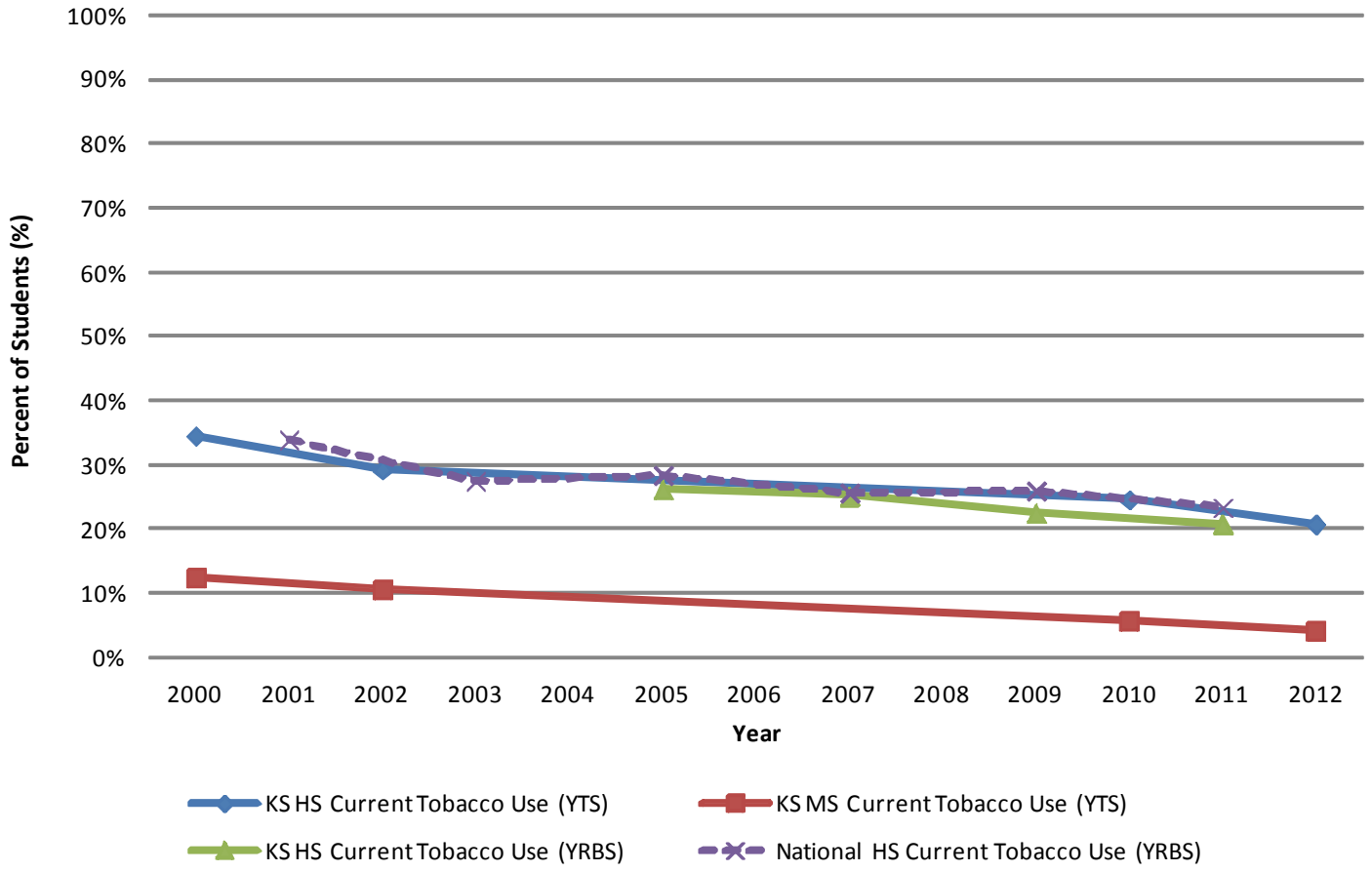
# ANY TOBACCO USE

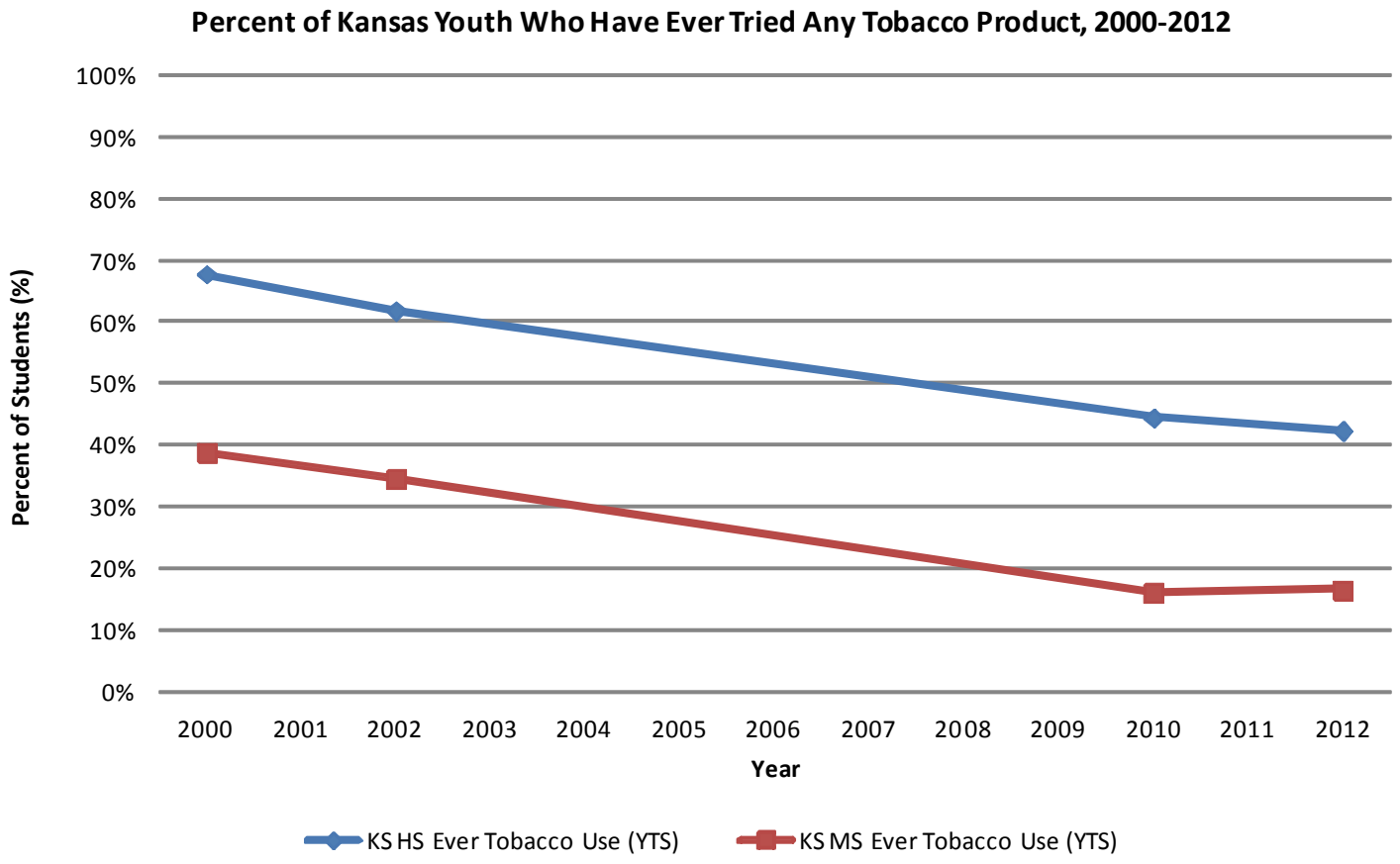
A composite measure of all tobacco use is difficult to measure consistently because questions about the same products and their patterns of use are not always asked consistently. For instance, the YRBS defines any tobacco use to include cigarettes, cigars and smokeless tobacco. The YTS asks about a broader variety of products that also usually includes pipe tobacco, bidis and sometimes kreteks (clove cigarettes). So, although the Kansas YRBS does not assess as many product categories and generally reports slightly lower estimates of any current tobacco use by high school students than the Kansas YTS, the differences between the surveys are not significantly different from year-to-year and appear to follow the same slope. This is probably because both surveys include the most common tobacco product categories in their definitions and many students who use less common products also tend to use these more common products.

Any current tobacco use by Kansas high school students closely mirrors any current tobacco use by high school students nationally. In 2000, 34.5 percent (95% CI: ±4.5%) of Kansas high school students reported currently using some kind of tobacco product. This fell significantly to 20.8 percent (95% CI: ±3.0%) of Kansas high school students in 2012, or about 1 in 5 Kansas high school students currently using some kind of tobacco product. Current tobacco use by Kansas middle school students has followed a similar pattern, reducing from 12.5 percent (95% CI: ±3.1%) in 2000 to 4.2 percent (95% CI: ±1.5%) in 2012 (figure 7).

The YRBS focuses on current use, so there is not enough information to estimate ever tobacco use. The YTS, however, estimates that 67.7 percent (95% CI: ±4.7%), or 2 in 3 high school students, had tried some kind of tobacco product in their life in 2000. This figure decreased to 42.4 percent (95% CI: ±4.3%) in 2012, or less than half of Kansas high school students report having ever tried any kind of tobacco product. The percent of Kansas middle school students who have ever tried any tobacco product has been cut by more than half since 2000. In 2000, 38.9 percent (95% CI: ±5.6%) of middle school students had tried some kind of tobacco product while in 2012, 16.7 percent (95% CI: ±3.2%) of middle school reported having tried a tobacco product (figure 8).

**Figure 7. Current Tobacco Use Among Kansas and United States Youth, 2000-2012**






# DISCUSSION

In summary, there have been dramatic reductions in many kinds of youth tobacco use in Kansas since 2000. Current cigarette smoking by Kansas high school students has been halved and the percent of Kansas middle school students who have tried a tobacco product has been cut by more than half.

Still, challenges remain. It is not acceptable that 1 in 5 high school students are currently using tobacco. Furthermore, if one includes new tobacco product categories introduced on the 2012 YTS in estimates of any tobacco use, the percent of Kansas high school students who currently use tobacco is closer to 1 in 4 (24.1%, 95% CI: ±3.3%). In this report, only older product categories were considered for the sake of comparison across years, but future reports will more closely examine these new product categories. There has also been no consistent change in smokeless tobacco use by male Kansas youth. Many of these youth will grow up to be nicotine-dependent adults who will suffer from tobacco-attributable disease and premature death.

It is important that Kansans continue to support tobacco prevention and offer cessation support to those who are already addicted. To learn more or get involved, visit the Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition online at http://www.tobaccofreekansas.org or the Kansas Tobacco Use Prevention Program at http://www.kdheks.gov/tobacco.

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