

Smoking rises as killer of women

WASHINGTON — And more teenage girls — 30 percent — are smoking now than a decade ago, the surgeon general reports.

By LAURAN NEERGAARD
of The Associated Press

Tobacco has become a leading killer of women, with lung cancer taking more women's lives than breast cancer, the surgeon general said Tuesday in a report on smoking that focuses on women.

Women now account for 39 percent of the nation's 400,000-plus smoking-related deaths each year, a proportion that has more than doubled since 1965.

Lung cancer caused by smoking is the top female cancer killer. It claimed 67,600 lives last year, 27,000 more than breast cancer, which women dread so much, said Surgeon General David Satcher.

About one in five women smokes, a rate that hasn't changed much in a decade.

But more teenage girls — 30 percent — are smoking now than 10 years ago.

Add a dramatic jump in tobacco marketing, to a record \$8.2 billion in 1999, and it appears the nation won't meet its goal of cutting female smoking in half by 2010, Satcher said.

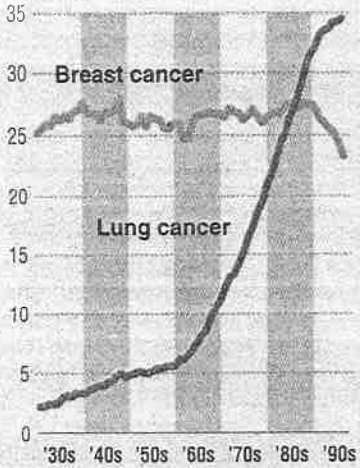
The report urges a major nationwide push to fight female tobacco use.

Federal regulation of the tobacco industry could help, said Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson, but that will require Congress to act.

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Lung cancer deaths rise

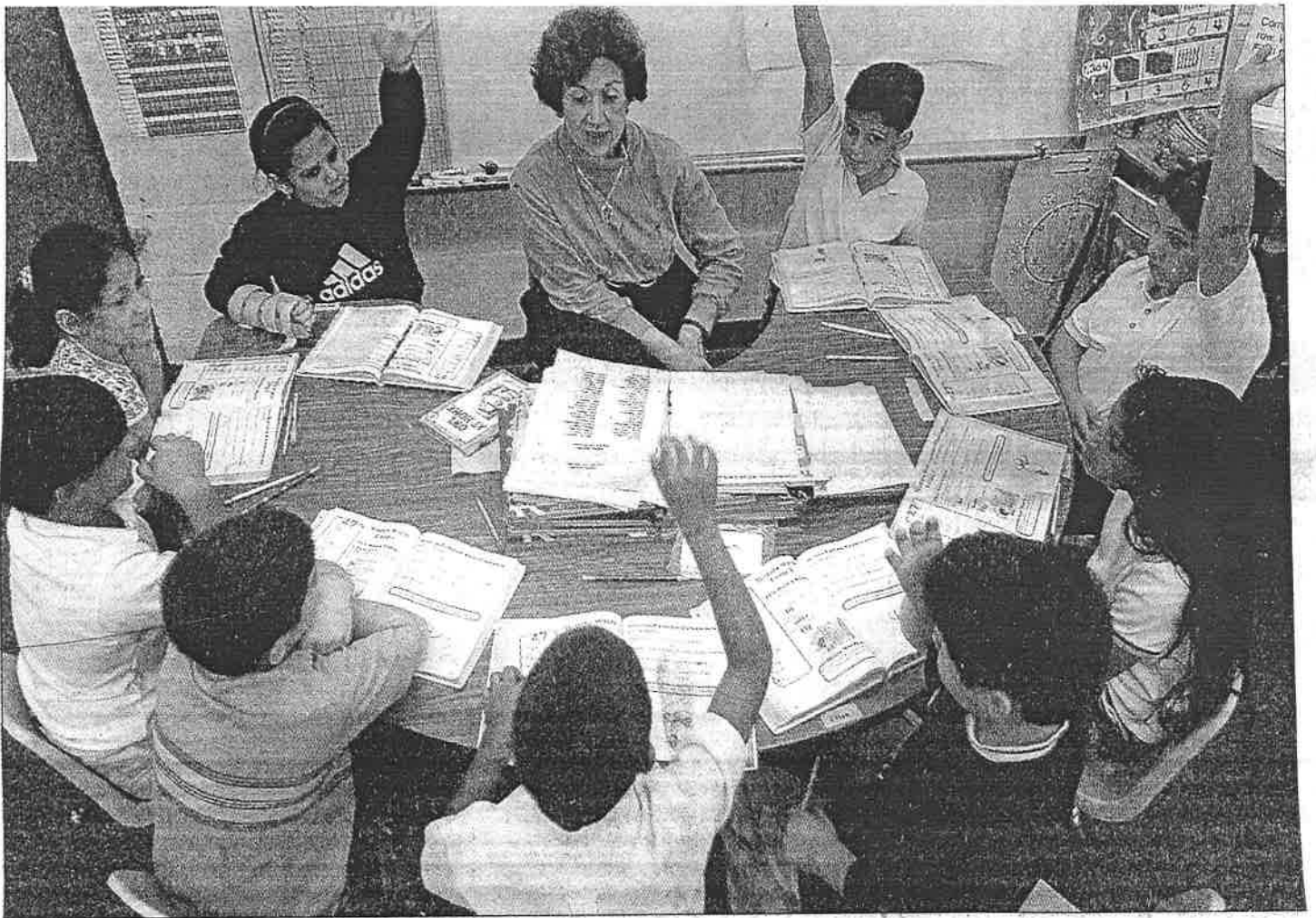
Death rates for lung cancer and breast cancer among women in the United States, 1930-1997, per 100,000 women



Note: Death rates are age-adjusted to the 1970 population.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

AP graphic



PHIL SHEFFIELD/Tribune photo

Alexander Elementary School teacher Grace Arregui instructs a group of second-graders who are learning English.

By PATTY RYAN
of The Tampa Tribune

TAMPA — Hands rise in Grace Arregui's second-grade classroom as 17 Alexander Elementary students wait to tell where they were born.

"Cuba," eight answer.

"Mexico," five say.

Now, home is Town 'N Country. But half of Alexander's nearly 800 students consider English a foreign language. Children of immigrants, they are walking evidence of numbers released by the Census Bureau on Tuesday, numbers that reflect the state's growing diversity.

In the past decade, while Florida's population rose by 23.5 percent, Hispanic numbers grew 70 percent, the government reported. Better than 2 in 5 newly counted Hillsborough County residents identified their ethnicity as Hispanic.

Hispanics, who number roughly 2.7 million statewide, overtook blacks as the state's largest minority.

The new census findings provide the first official count in 10 years of Florida's racial and ethnic makeup.

One in 6 Hillsborough residents said they were Hispanic.

Legal immigrants and illegal, they range from transplanted professionals to migrant laborers.

Some come for freedom; others for prosperity.

"You can make more money here," says Spanish-speaking farmworker Uriel Lopez, 23, from Chiapas, Mexico, sharing shade with a rooster outside Julia's Tacos in Wimauma.

One in 9 Hillsborough County schoolchildren speaks only limited English, compared with 1 in 10 last year, and 1 in 29 at the time of the 1990 Census.

"From everything we hear and see and experience, it seems to be a trend



JIM REED/Tribune photo

Children nap at the Wimauma Child Development Center, which will open two more centers next year to accommodate the influx of children.

that's going to continue," says Carmen Sorondo, who oversees limited English programs for Hillsborough County public schools.

In the past decade, the suburbs of Tampa have witnessed steady Hispanic growth, not only in the rural migrant strongholds of Ruskin and Wimauma, but also in blue-collar Town

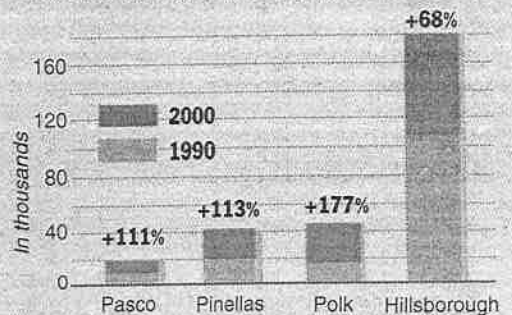
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Growth in Hispanic population

The number of Floridians identifying themselves as Hispanic grew by 70 percent in the last decade. Today, 17 percent of the state's residents of all races are of Hispanic ethnicity.

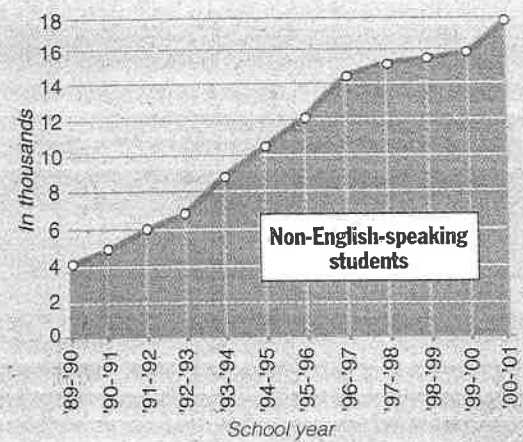
Bay area shows surge

Hispanic population in the Bay area overall grew faster than the statewide average.



and schools strive to keep up.

An increasing number of Hillsborough County schoolchildren arrive on campus speaking little English. The students are largely Spanish-speaking. In 1989-90, 1 in 29 of the children didn't speak English. For 1999-2000, the proportion was almost 1 in 10. Now it's 1 in 9.



Source: Hillsborough County public schools; Programs for Limited English Proficient Students, U.S. Census Bureau.

Tribune research by DOUG STANLEY/Tribune graphic

On TBO.com

Today, TBO.com launches its Census 2000 site, which includes a U.S. population counter, links to facts about each state and a breakdown of the population change in Florida counties from 1990 to 2000. The site will be a resource for Tribune articles on the census and in the future will feature interactive polls, opinion surveys and audio reports.



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Water levels in Winter Haven's Chain of Lakes are so low that some canals have dried up. Businesses are losing customers.

FLORIDA METRO-1



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WOMEN / Lung cancer a top killer

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Satcher pointed to industry ads that lure girls by featuring sexy women, including a new R.J. Reynolds campaign that says, "Until I find a real man, I'll take a real smoke."

"What starts out as a simple puff is turning into a death sentence," added Thompson, pending to travel the country to preach the "evils of smoking" as his office hunts new antitobacco strategies.

The last big federal attempt to curb smoking — Food and Drug Administration regulation to prevent cigarette companies from targeting minors — failed in a U.S. Supreme Court challenge.

"Speaking only for myself, I think tobacco should be regulated," Thompson said Tuesday. But because of the court action, "it's up to Congress to pass legislation."

Legislation to reopen FDA regulation is pending.

Philip Morris, the world's largest tobacco company, supports the

surgeon general's efforts to alert women about smoking's risks, as well as FDA regulation, said spokesman Michael Pfeil.

"We don't market to children," he said, noting that the industry's \$252 billion settlement of state antitobacco lawsuits in 1998 included programs to fight youth smoking. "Everyone who smokes that kids shouldn't smoke."

Satcher's report sparked an immediate congressional move to help women kick the habit.

Sens. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., and Sam Brownback, R-Kan., introduced legislation to allow Medicaid to pay for antismoking drugs and other cessation therapy for poor women, and to allow elderly Medicare recipients access to smoking cessation counseling.

Quitting dramatically reduces chances of smoking-caused illnesses — eight types of cancer, heart disease and other lung diseases that hit women and men.

But women face additional risks: menstrual irregularities and earlier menopause; infertility; oste-

oporosis; arthritis; cervical cancer; and blood clots if they use birth-control pills.

That's in addition to the dangers of smoking during pregnancy, which include low birth weight, stillbirths, miscarriages and sudden infant death syndrome.

And "if you really want to get your surgeon general upset," take a baby into those crowded airport smoking lounges where 50 people puff at once, Satcher said.

Secondhand smoke causes asthma and other illnesses.

Some states are effectively fighting female smoking, Satcher said, urging more to follow suit.

In Florida, a campaign by teenagers educating other teens reportedly reduced smoking by middle school girls from 18.1 percent in 1998 to 10.9 percent last year.

Nineteen percent of women in Florida smoked in 1999, according to a recent report from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

▶ Read the surgeon general's report at www.cdc.gov/tobacco

SURVEY / Consumer confidence rebounds

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conomic conditions or future expectations," Franco said.

Stocks surged on the news. The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed up 260 points at 9,947. The Nasdaq closed up 54 to 1,972.

Analysts were cautious because a portion of the survey on income expectations showed no improvement from February to March, nor did a section asking people about their current finances.

"Taken together, the two components in our view do not signal an 'all clear' for the consumer," said David Orr, chief economist for First Union Corp., Charlotte, N.C.

Commerce Department figures released Tuesday also offset the apparent optimism by showing that factory orders for big-ticket goods fell in February for the second straight month.

President Bush renewed his call for immediate tax relief.

"In the short term, the American consumer needs a hand. ... So I strongly support the idea of backdating tax relief to get cash into the consumers' hands as quickly as possible," Bush said in a speech Tuesday in Kalamazoo, Mich.

He compared the economy to a great athlete who is "somewhat winded but fundamentally strong."

Meanwhile, Senate Democrats pushed a plan Tuesday to give a \$300 rebate this year to single taxpayers, \$600 to married couples.

The Conference Board's monthly survey of 5,000 households is considered a key economic indicator because consumer spending accounts for two-thirds of the U.S. economy.

Nationally, such spending is down from about 6 percent annual growth in recent years to 2 percent

to 3 percent, said Gerald Cohen, a Merrill Lynch senior economist.

Improved expectations fueled the increase in consumer confidence, Franco said. The survey's Expectations Index jumped from 70.7 in February to 83.6 in March.

The proportion of people who expected business conditions to improve rose from 11.3 percent in February to 15.4 percent in March. Those who expected conditions to worsen dropped from 17.6 percent to 13.6 percent. Those expecting fewer jobs to become available fell from 26.5 percent to 20.1 percent.

Orr said unemployment figures over the next couple of months would be the best determinant of consumer confidence. The next ones are due April 6.

▶ To review the Conference Board's report, go to www.conferenceboard.org

▶ Information from The New York Times was used in this report.

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