

## **ON THE MOVE TO ACHIEVE COMMUNITY CHANGE FOR BETTER HEALTH**

*Salamanca, New York team mobilizes community support for health-promoting policies*

### **Public Health Problem**

- Salamanca, New York is a unique community that is subject to both city and tribal government councils due to its location on the Seneca Nation reservation.
- Preventing chronic disease by establishing local policies and supportive environmental conditions to promote healthy lifestyles takes cooperative action by leaders and stakeholders.
- A broad cross section of community members working with expert technical assistance and community ‘coaches’ is a successful model for beneficial environment and policy change.

### **Program**

- With funding from an Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and Environmental Change (ACHIEVE) grant and led by community ‘coaches’ from the health department, the YMCA, and nearby Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Salamanca community developed a diverse Community Health Action Response Team. The team includes key stakeholders representing the tribal council, tribal health, business, law enforcement, the mayor’s office, city and county councils, media, schools, youth bureau, and rural health.
- Team participation in the ACHIEVE Action Institute jump-started their learning about policy and environmental change to promote health and the development of local strategies. Having the mayor’s office, law enforcement, tribal representatives and popular local media on the team has proved especially important for garnering broad community support for initiatives to improve the community environment through policy change.
- Initial team discussion focused on strategies for making Salamanca more pedestrian and bicyclist-friendly and on youth smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke.

### **Impact**

The Salamanca community’s commitment to action led it to accomplish two major tobacco policy changes in just a few months despite the fact that tobacco policy is a contentious local issue and approval from both tribal and city councils was needed:

- A new city ordinance permits authorities to confiscate tobacco products from underage tobacco-users, providing a teachable moment to accompany this preventive step. Salamanca’s police chief says he “doesn’t mind working harder to enforce this law,” since city officers “want to do right.”
- The Salamanca City Council with the mayor’s support adopted a measure making local parks, including the ice pond, tobacco-free with self-enforcement by the public and youth. Posted signs reading “Young Lungs at Play” indirectly communicate the benefits of not smoking and encourage community support & compliance.

### **Contacts**

Deb Nichols  
716-701-3383  
DJNichols@cattco.org

Kate O’Stricker  
716-699-2377, ext. 122  
kmo11@cornell.edu

Ann Marie Wright  
716-373-2400  
awright@oleanymca.org