

EFFECTIVE TOBACCO QUIT LINE SERVICES EXPAND THEIR REACH

West Virginia tobacco control intervention increases enrollment, including pregnant smokers

Public Health Problem

- Tobacco is clearly a problem for West Virginia which has the third highest adult smoking rate in the country and the highest rate of spit/smokeless tobacco use among men.
- Tobacco use costs the state well over a billion for health care annually and another billion in lost productivity.
- An independent group, the Task Force on Community Preventive Services, strongly recommends specific interventions for preventing and reducing tobacco use such as cessation interventions and reducing out-of-pocket costs for treatment.

Program

- The West Virginia Bureau for Public Health's Division of Tobacco Prevention offers effective tobacco quitline services at no-cost to all West Virginia citizens - providing highly trained, certified phone coaches to help participants quit tobacco as well as nicotine replacement therapy for qualified enrollees and information and materials on quitting tobacco.
- The Tobacco-Free Pregnancy Initiative educates women of child-bearing age and those who are already pregnant on the dangers of using tobacco and educates healthcare providers on the urgent need for face-to-face tobacco cessation counseling.
- The Division also funds four projects throughout the state focused on the special issues of African Americans and tobacco use.
- The Health Care Provider Training Program administered by the Marshall University School of Medicine continues to train large numbers of health care providers on face-to-face tobacco cessation counseling and prescribing of cessation aids.

Impact

- Tobacco quitline enrollment increased with the offer of free services to all West Virginians and rose thirty percent in just twelve months.
- The number of pregnant tobacco users enrolled for quitline services increased over twenty percent. (Babies born to women who smoke during pregnancy are more likely to be born with low birth weight and to die of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.)
- Ongoing evaluation documents an overall 32% quit rate which has saved the state millions in future health costs. The quit rate for spit/smokeless tobacco users is even higher at over 50%.
- The return on investment for tobacco quitline services and associated media support is more than \$7 for every \$1 spent.

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