

West Virginia

Teen Smoking Cessation Intervention Selected as Model Program

Producing Results

In field-based evaluations of Not on Tobacco (N-O-T) programs that included more than 4,500 teens, the reported quit rate was 26%. The American Lung Association then adopted N-O-T as a national best-practice model and began disseminating it nationwide. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has designated N-O-T as a model program, and the agency supports the provision of materials, training, and technical assistance for nationwide implementation.

Public Health Problem

Every year, more than 400,000 people die prematurely from diseases caused by smoking or other forms of tobacco use. Approximately 80% of adult smokers started smoking before age 18. Nearly one-fourth (23%) of teens report smoking cigarettes, and more than two-thirds say they would like to quit.

Taking Action

Researchers from the West Virginia University Prevention Research Center (PRC), working with the American Lung Association (ALA) and the West Virginia Department of Education and Bureau of Public Health, developed Not on Tobacco (N-O-T), a smoking cessation program that was both effective and appealing to teenagers. The PRC conducted a 5-year project to test N-O-T among teens in rural Appalachian schools. Participating students learned techniques to reduce stress, handle peer pressure, control nicotine cravings, eat well, and engage in regular exercise. In field-based evaluations of Not on Tobacco programs that included more than 4,500 teens in multiple states, the reported quit rate was 26%. According to the ALA, the success rate in West Virginia is even higher: 30% of 1,623 students who completed N-O-T in West Virginia between 1999 and 2006 quit smoking, and 53% reduced their smoking. The ALA adopted the program as a national best-practice model and began disseminating it nationwide. The PRC Program is funding a pilot project to test the feasibility of creating a Web site to enhance the reach and implementation of the N-O-T program.

Implications and Impact

Since 1999, more than 100,000 teens in 48 states have participated in the N-O-T program. From 1999 through 2003, about one of every six participants quit smoking as a result, and many more reduced their smoking. Translation of materials for use by Spanish-speaking and American Indian populations is increasing the reach of the program. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has designated N-O-T as a “model program.” The agency supports the provision of materials, training, and technical assistance for nationwide implementation of the program.