

New York

Increasing Tobacco Cessation Rates through Health Systems Changes

Producing Results

The Steps Program in Chautauqua County, NY implemented a proven strategy in health systems to reduce tobacco use, leading to a quadrupling in the number of referrals given by health care providers to the NY state Smokers' Quitline and a decrease in smoking rates in Chautauqua County from almost 29% in 2004 to less than 24% in 2006.

Public Health Problem

Smoking rates continue to remain above New York state (NYS) levels in Chautauqua County. In 2004, nearly 28% of Chautauqua County residents reported being current smokers, compared with only 20% of NYS residents.

Taking Action

The Steps Program in Chautauqua County, NY collaborated with its local Tobacco Control Program and Women's Christian Association (WCA) Hospital to change hospital policy on asking patients about tobacco use. Health care providers from a variety of disciplines were trained by Wellness Coordinators and the Steps Community Program Facilitator to ask about tobacco use and to follow the 5A Model, a 2-minute tobacco cessation intervention that has been shown to be effective in helping smokers quit. The WCA Hospital implemented the 2-minute intervention strategy, revising the patient intake form to reflect the patient's tobacco use and providing tobacco cessation materials and referrals to the NYS Smokers' Quitline when applicable.

Implications and Impact

As of May 2006, more than 547 health care providers were trained to use the 5A Model, and the WCA Hospital changed its patient intake and education forms to reflect the new process. As a result of the new policy, total calls to the NYS Smokers' Quitline from referrals by health care providers quadrupled from 2005 to 2006 and resulted in a 50% increase in calls compared with a neighboring county that has similar demographics. In addition, data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System for Chautauqua County show that the percentage of adult smokers during 2005–2006 was 23.7%, which is a decrease from 28.8% in 2004–2005.

New York

Implementing an Innovative Solution to Increase Healthier Options in School Cafeterias

Public Health Problem

In 2005, almost 75% of Broome County, NY residents reported that they did not eat 5 fruits and vegetables a day. These rates were even higher among high school students; over 80% of high school students reported that they did not eat 5 fruits and vegetables a day in 2005.

Taking Action

“Rock on Café” is a community collaborative effort to provide healthier meals and food options in school districts within Broome and Tioga Counties in New York State. As part of this effort, 14 Broome and Tioga County school districts came together to create a consolidated bid and menu system. Broome and Tioga County school districts shared the services of a registered dietitian to analyze and standardize their breakfast and lunch menus. The dietitian, in partnership with the food service directors, created healthy breakfast and lunch entrees. These meals include fresh fruits and vegetables at an affordable price that are kid tasted and parent approved. Whenever possible, local produce and products are utilized as part of the Farm to School initiative, an initiative to increase the use of locally grown produce in school food service programs. A logo, brand and website were created to help students and parents make healthier choices. In addition, the Food Service Director in one of the Broome County school districts led the effort to purchase larger quantities of healthier foods, enabling all of the schools to obtain healthier products at lower costs. This same Food Service Director has recently been appointed to the New York State Governor’s Food Policy Council, which is charged with making recommendations to the Governor on state regulations, legislation and budget proposals in the area of food policy to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive inter-agency approach to state food policy issues. It is also tasked with identifying ways to increase the sale of New York agricultural products, with an emphasis on expanding the consumer market for locally-grown and organically-grown food to promote healthier communities.

“Rock on Café” is led by Broome-Tioga BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) and the regional school district food service directors in partnership with the Steps program in NY and in concert with all of Broome and Tioga County School Districts and a host of other partners (including the American Cancer Association, the American Heart Association, United Health Services-Stay Healthy Center, Lourdes Public Relations, News Channel 34, the Rural Health Network, the Family Enrichment Network, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Our Green Acres Farm, Cornell University, the Binghamton Mets, the Binghamton Senators, the Press & Sun Bulliton, NutriKids and the Child Nutrition Program). This community coalition was the catalyst that created a standard regional lunch menu system.

Implications and Impact

As a result, all elementary schools in Broome and Tioga Counties now offer the same healthier breakfast and lunch entrees. Based on a survey conducted in 2006, the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables over canned and frozen increased by 14%. This regional community collaboration has forged system and environmental changes in Broome and Tioga County cafeterias and enabled them to leverage their purchasing power to allow for increased fresh fruits and vegetables to be purchased at a lower cost.