



Chautauque County's Steps Program

Educating patients on tobacco use and cessation

What is the public health problem?

Tobacco use is a significant public health problem among adults in Chautauque County. Nearly 23% of Chautauque County residents reported being current smokers in 2006, according to data from the 2006* Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

How Steps is responding

The Chautauque County Steps Program, in collaboration with the local Tobacco Control Program and hospital staff members, helped implement a new policy at the Women's Christian Association (WCA) Hospital that requires health care providers to directly address patients' tobacco use and cessation efforts.

- Health care providers from a variety of disciplines were trained by Wellness Coordinators and the Steps Community Program Facilitator to follow the 5 A's intervention model with every patient. The 5 A's model, a 2-minute strategy shown to increase tobacco cessation, encourages health care providers to 1) ask patients about tobacco use, 2) advise patients to quit, 3) assess patients' willingness to quit, 4) assist in cessation attempts, and 5) arrange for patient follow-up. Providers are also encouraged to refer patients to the state Quitline, where intensive counseling can be provided.

- The WCA Hospital implemented the 2-minute intervention strategy, revising the patient intake form to reflect the patient's tobacco-use status and providing smoking-cessation materials and referrals to the NYS Smokers' Quitline when applicable.

What is the impact?

- As of May 2006, more than 547 health care providers were trained on the 2-minute intervention, 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 health care provider referrals quadrupled from 2005 to 2006 and resulted in a 50% increase in calls compared with a neighboring county that has similar demographics.
- The Chautauque County Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data show that nearly 29% of adults smoked during 2004–2005. This percentage decreased during 2005–2006 to about 24%.

Why this program is working

Brief interventions promoting smoking cessation, such as the 5 A's model, have been shown to be effective in helping smokers quit.[†]

* Most recent data available

[†] http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/treating_tobacco_use.pdf