



Innovative approach to tobacco cessation

The PHH-PRC and the West Broadway Task Force (WBTF) worked to develop and implement a novel smoking-cessation program at the West Broadway Housing Development (WBHD). WBHD is one of three large public housing developments in South Boston, a neighborhood of Boston in which tobacco-related mortality rates

substantially exceed those of the rest of the Commonwealth and city.

Tobacco cessation pilot project profile

Goal

1. To increase access to smoking-cessation services
2. To create a trained core of skilled, motivational leaders who can sustain cessation service-related efforts at WBHD and other sites

Project Components

1. Eight-module curriculum training guide
2. Tobacco Treatment Advocates (English-speaking and Spanish-speaking residents) provide education and access to treatment through a cycle that includes receiving nicotine replacement therapy, counseling from specialists, and ongoing support
3. Removal of barriers to obtaining smoking-cessation services (financial, transportation, childcare)



Highlights of Successes

- Created strong working relationship among partners
- Trained four residents as Tobacco Treatment Advocates
- Mobilized team of trained residents who conducted 110 surveys about the health risks associated with smoking
- Identified first group of residents interested in quitting smoking, and followed up with treatment
- Secured additional funding to maintain and expand scope of program

BACKGROUND

High smoking rates among persons of lower socioeconomic status, including residents of public housing, are an important source of health disparities. To this end, a study at the West Broadway Housing Development (WBHD) in South Boston, MA, aimed at testing the feasibility of an innovative smoking cessation program.

The program model is built around the use of (1) a Tobacco Treatment Specialist (TTS), who provides on-site cessation counseling and NRT, and (2) two bilingual (English/Spanish) WBHD residents trained as Tobacco Treatment Advocates (TTAs) to provide motivational interventions, raise awareness of health risks of tobacco and availability of treatment services, and refer residents to more intensive services provided by the TTS. We conducted door-to-door surveys in randomly selected homes before providing services.

We obtained baseline information on 188 residents. Seventy percent of the respondents were female and the majority (57%) had children living with them. Hispanics comprised the largest ethnic group (44%) followed by whites (32%) and African-Americans (15%). Fifty-five percent of residents spoke English at home, while 38% spoke Spanish. Twenty-six percent were current smokers; 40% of all residents (and 79% of smokers) permitted smoking in their homes. Smoking was considered a "big problem" by 69% of residents. Thus far, 23 people have participated in the program (attended 1 or more TTS counseling sessions). Among these participants, 17 have used NRT. Participants have attended 5.7 TTS sessions while enrolled.

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