

# Prevention Research Centers



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# Connecticut



## Offering Smokers a Variety of Options to Help Them Quit

### Public Health Problem

Heart disease is the leading cause of death among both men and women in the United States, and smokers have three times the risk for heart disease than nonsmokers. This risk, however, can be substantially reduced when smokers quit. About 25% of residents in Connecticut's Lower Naugatuck Valley smoke, and this raises their risk for heart disease and other tobacco-related conditions.

### Program Example

Preventing heart disease is a priority at the Yale–Griffin Prevention Research Center, a partnership between Yale University and Griffin Hospital. The center's researchers developed a specialized approach to helping smokers quit smoking and tested it among a subset of smokers in the Lower Naugatuck Valley. The researchers aimed for a 40% quit rate among study participants rather than the 25% goal of most smoking cessation programs. They reviewed the literature on smoking cessation and identified seven factors that interfere with a smoker's ability to quit smoking: nicotine addiction, depression, anxiety, stress, chemical dependency, weight control, and living with another smoker. Study participants completed questionnaires to rate the importance of each factor. The researchers then used the results to refer participants to one or more appropriate interventions. All participants were assigned to group counseling sessions. Some participants attended weight management or exercise groups, while other participants invited friends and family members to educational dinners where they were encouraged to quit smoking. Other participants were referred for medication or individual counseling.

### Implications and Impact

Connecticut's results show that offering multiple approaches is effective in promoting smoking cessation. After 1 year, the results exceeded expectations—42% of the participants had quit smoking. Similar interventions are now being offered to high school students and worksite groups, and eventually they will be offered to all of Lower Naugatuck Valley. Plans are under way to make this Prevention Research Center's questionnaire available to primary care physicians to help them prescribe smoking cessation plans appropriate for their patients.

### Contact Information

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# South Carolina



## Promoting Physical Activity Through Environmental and Policy Supports

### Public Health Problem

Almost three fourths of U.S. adults are not active enough; in fact, almost a third of U.S. adults are inactive, despite recommendations for 30 minutes of physical activity at least 5 days a week. Not getting enough physical activity puts people at risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. Many community environments discourage physical activity because they do not have sidewalks for walking, facilities for bicycling, or places to safely play outdoors.

### Program Example

The Prevention Research Center at the University of South Carolina is striving to help Sumter County adults get the recommended amount of physical activity. County residents were encouraged to form a community coalition, which now receives technical assistance, training, and other resources from the Prevention Research Center. Residents are learning how to make policy and environmental changes that support physical activity. The center guided the community coalition in setting goals and objectives, which led to activities such as walking programs and National Trails Day events. The community's heightened awareness and advocacy led to more sidewalk projects, bike lanes, share-the-road projects, and local trails. It also spurred the launch of worksite walking and Adopt-a-Park programs as well as the printing and distribution of 24,000 maps identifying walking routes in the area. In addition, a worksite wellness policy was established by one of the county's largest employers. The researchers helped the community with the initial assessment, through surveys and focus groups.

### Implications and Impact

The University of South Carolina Prevention Research Center is expanding knowledge about how to organize and encourage coalitions. The center also is helping county residents gain support from local parks and recreation departments as well as recognition by other community and governmental organizations. The researchers have prepared reports and made presentations to community leaders and shared information at state and national meetings of physical activity professionals. The center will prepare additional reports to educate government officials and will publish scientific papers describing the process of this community's participation in the project.