



Collaborating to Form a Successful Partnership for a Tobacco-Free Maine

Public Health Problem

Of the more than 1.3 million people living in Maine, 23.6% are aged 18 years or younger, and an estimated 24% of adults smoke. If current tobacco-use patterns persist, one-third of tobacco users aged 18 years or younger will die prematurely of a smoking-related disease when they reach adulthood.

Program Example

Maine's tobacco control program is one of the few state programs funded at the minimum level recommended by CDC's *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program*. In 1997, the state legislature raised the excise tax on cigarettes and used a portion of that money to establish the Partnership for a Tobacco-Free Maine. The partnership implements CDC's *Guidelines for School Health Programs* in schools and establishes tobacco use prevention and control programs in communities. In addition, excise tax funds are used to support statewide media campaigns, a quit line, evaluation efforts, and training and technical assistance contracts for community programs.

Implications and Impact

Since the Partnership for a Tobacco-Free Maine was established, the prevalence of cigarette smoking among high school students has declined dramatically. Nearly 40% of students smoked cigarettes in 1997, but this figure dropped to 20.5% of students by 2003, according to the state's Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Moreover, the state cigarette excise tax increased from 74 cents per pack to \$1 per pack in 2001. The Healthy Maine Partnerships initiative is a promising example of how collaboration between a state tobacco control program and state chronic disease program can be mutually beneficial. This state program has been successful in working with state and local partners, including other public health programs.

Contact Information

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