



Low Cost Strategies for Promoting Tobacco Cessation

BACKGROUND

Effectively promoting tobacco cessation can present many challenges for organizations with limited budgets. Paid media, such as TV, radio, print, and direct mail, is very expensive and even unpaid media, such as press releases, may not always achieve the desired results. According to the Task Force on Community Preventive Services, strong scientific evidence exists that mass media campaigns combined with other interventions such as community education programs are effective in increasing tobacco use cessation and in reducing consumption of tobacco products. Strong scientific evidence also demonstrates that multicomponent health care system interventions that include a minimum of provider reminder system and provider education program are effective in increasing both delivery of advice to quit and patient tobacco use cessation.¹

RECOMMENDATIONS

Developing relationships with groups or organizations that are in a position to refer smokers to cessation programs can be an effective, low cost strategy for reaching large numbers of smokers. For example, healthcare providers are natural partners for tobacco cessation programs and can play a major role in increasing their utilization.

Providers who ask all patients whether they use tobacco, advise quitting, and refer patients to cessation programs can have a profound impact on patient health. There are also a variety of other organizations that touch large numbers of people, including smokers, which present excellent opportunities for collaboration. Such groups include:

- Professional organizations of physicians, nurses, physician assistants, dentists, dental hygienists, pharmacists, mental health providers, drug and alcohol counselors and more
- Hospitals, clinics, and university health centers
- County public health programs such California Screening Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment (CASBIRT) programs; California Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) program; Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Program; and Perinatal Screening, Assessment, Referral and Treatment (SART) programs
- Provider training schools

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- Pharmaceutical companies
- Pharmacies
- Large employers
- Unions
- Small employer associations and Chambers of Commerce
- Smoke-free policy makers and enforcers

Promotional strategies can include:

- Develop a Performance Partnership or collaboration (*contact the Smoking Cessation Leadership Center*)
- Offer a CME course to providers on the Ask, Advise, Refer intervention (*contact the Center for Tobacco Cessation*)
- Design and implement a proactive patient referral system
- Identify existing organizational marketing vehicles for cessation messages such as new member kits, web sites, list servs, and print and electronic newsletters, pay check stubs, pharmacy bags and receipts, and pharmacy coupons for Nicotine Replacement Therapy
- Submit newsletter articles and client testimonials for inclusion in print and electronic newsletters
- Create co-branded marketing materials such as ads, direct mail pieces, educational materials, and give-aways (*contact the Tobacco Education Clearinghouse*)
- Develop joint campaigns to motivate providers to refer patients to cessation programs. Create a web page on the organization's website about the campaign.
- Place banner ads or links to cessation program websites on organizational websites
- Incorporate quitline phone numbers into any "No Smoking" signs developed by policy makers that have recently adopted a smoke-free policy for beaches, parks, college campuses, hospital campuses, transit waiting areas, restaurants, etc.
- Distribute counter-top displays and educational materials to pharmacies and pharmaceutical representatives

The Center for Tobacco Cessation can develop a customized plan for your organization promoting tobacco cessation in your service area.

RESOURCES

Center for Tobacco Cessation
(866) 610-C4TC (2482)
www.CenterforCessation.org

Tobacco Education Clearinghouse
(800) 258-9090
www.tecc.org

Smoking Cessation Leadership Center
(415) 502-8880
www.smokingcessationleadership.ucsf.edu

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¹ Hopkins DP, Briss PA, Ricard CJ, et al. Reviews of Evidence Regarding Interventions to Reduce Tobacco Use and Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke. *Am J Prev Med* 2001;20 (2S)