Mobilizing a Community To Reduce Tobacco Use

Door-to-door surveys assessed smoking prevalence and beliefs in two Milwaukee neighborhoods.

Description: The It Takes a Community to Help a Smoker project developed smoking cessation and prevention strategies and conducted door-to-door surveys in two of the lowest socio-economic status ZIP code areas in metropolitan Milwaukee. The survey was designed to assess beliefs about smoking and quitting by impoverished smokers in relation to past quitting behavior and intention to quit in the future.

Relevance: Little is known about the smoking and quitting beliefs of the very poor ($15,000 or less annual family income) because they tend not to be included in research.

Partnerships: The Salvation Army of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan partnered with the St. Vincent DePaul Society, UW Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention and the Wisconsin Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. This project included the guidance of a stakeholder’s group from the community.

Results: 654 people completed the survey (a response rate of 78.3 percent), and self-reported smoking prevalence was 42.1 percent. Sixty-eight percent reported annual household incomes of less than $15,000, compared to 30.8 percent in the community as a whole and 13 percent of households nationally. Outreach activities included community-developed billboards, flyers in local stores and presentations to community residents, often through faith-based social services.

Published article: Christiansen, B., Reeder, K., Hill, M., Baker, T. and Fiore, M. (2012). "Barriers to Effective Tobacco Dependence Treatment for the Very Poor." Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Other Drugs.

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO HELP A SMOKER

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Award: $430,612 over four years