

Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story

Continuous Education: Continuing to Support the India Street Public Health Center.

Summary

In partnership with the India Street Public Health Center, the City of Portland continues to provide technical assistance, QuitLink trainings, and policy assistance to better equip staff with the appropriate tools to help patients lead tobacco free lives.

Need/ Issue

The India Street Public Health Center is essential to the health and safety of many of Portland's residents, largely due to its free and accessible services. In addition to the Needle Exchange program and STD Clinic, the Portland Community Free Clinic (PCFC) is an essential service that provides primary care to uninsured, low-income adults living in Cumberland County. For smokers, those of a low socioeconomic status are just as likely to attempt quitting than those outside of their demographic; however, people of lower socioeconomic statuses are less likely to be successful.

Intervention

For patients who smoke, when they receive assistance from their provider they are twice as likely to successfully quit smoking than those who do not receive that support. For that reason, the volunteer healthcare and intake staff at the PCFC receive Non-Clinical Outreach (NCO) training annually to learn the latest information available for their patients who are interested in quitting smoking. In March 2020, the PCFC team came prepared with questions to ask their District Tobacco Prevention Partner (DTPP) from the City of Portland Public Health about the latest developments in the tobacco industry: "What exactly is a vape?" "What about my patients who say there are less chemicals in it than a cigarette?" "What should I say to a pregnant mother who started vaping to stop smoking?" While information and statistics about tobacco dependence and referring to the QuitLink were at the ready, the presentation was informal with four staff members in attendance and there was encouragement to share questions as they came up.

Results

While the staff discussed the new experiences they had having with their patients inside the clinic, it came up that they were noticing more individuals using electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) on the premises. While the India Street Public Health Center already had a standing tobacco-free policy, specifically naming ENDS products was not a part of it. Following the NCO training, the DTPP was able to pass a more comprehensive policy for the healthcare site – qualifying for Platinum Status in the Gold Star Standards of Excellence program – and the office manager assisted in connecting with the property manager, who oversaw not only the health center but a multi-unit housing facility that was attached. This connection was an unexpected outcome that was warmly received by the property manager, who had been struggling with residents abiding by the current policy. At this moment, collaborating with the property manager is in development.



"It was helpful to learn more about vaping as it has become a bigger issue in recent months" Anonymous Feedback for NCO Training

For More Information Contact Us At:

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