

# Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story

Homeless Coalition working to help their clients QUIT smoking and SAVE \$\$

## Summary

Molly Stone, Knox County District Tobacco Prevention Partner, met with 15 staff at Knox County Homeless Coalition in February, and covered topics such as how to talk to clients about their nicotine use in a non-judgmental and supportive way, as well as how to refer them to the Maine Tobacco Helpline or register them on the Quitlink.

## Need/ Issue (or "Challenge")

"Approximately three quarters of homeless adults are cigarette smokers - a prevalence 4 times that in the U.S. adult population and 2.5 times that among impoverished Americans in general"<sup>1</sup>



## Intervention/ Program Description

Smoking presents additional challenges to the homeless population. Not only is the cost an added burden to their limited budget, rentals rarely allow smoking, and the health impacts add to medical bills. Those people working directly with the homeless are in an opportune position to help them understand the importance of quitting and to show them tools to support quitting. On Feb. 18, 2020, Molly presented a slide show while engaging in conversation with staff about how to support their clients, including how to refer them to the Maine Tobacco Helpline or Quitlink. Hopefully this will increase quit rates, while keeping money in the pockets of those needing affordable housing, and also increasing their housing options.

*"I have found that if I include cigarettes/vapes as a separate item when working out a budget with my clients (instead of lumped in with groceries), the cost of their addiction becomes much more impactful, often motivating them to quit." -Case Manager*



## Results/ Success

As a result of this training, staff now feel more comfortable and willing to talk to clients about their tobacco use and how to help them take a step towards quitting. They understand the resources available and how to use them. Hopefully this will result in more attempts to quit and more calls to the Maine Tobacco Helpline.

Reference: 1. July 18, 2013. *N Engl J Med* 2013; 369:201-204

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