

Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story

Preventing Underage Sales: Educating Tobacco Retailers

Summary

In June, Healthy Acadia led a virtual tobacco retailer training as part of its education efforts around new tobacco laws and free resources. Four retailers attended the training and Healthy Acadia was featured on WABI-TV5 news.

Need/ Issue (or “Challenge”)

Tobacco retailers constitute a new setting for engagement based on the Center for Tobacco Independence’s Year 4 Workplan. Retailer education has become a new priority in tobacco prevention as a result of new laws and regulations. Healthy Acadia supports tobacco retailers as they sell tobacco responsibly to prevent underage sales. In its list of recommendations for preventing youth tobacco use, the US CDC includes retailer education and enforcement of retailer sales laws as key elements of a comprehensive tobacco control program to restrict youth access to tobacco and prevent initiation of its use.¹



Intervention/ Program Description

Prior to engaging in outreach with tobacco retailers in their service area, Healthy Acadia (HA) staff spoke with staff of Healthy Communities of the Capital Area, another District Partner, who both graciously explained the process they had used in designing their own retailer training and offered to share their slide deck with Healthy Acadia. HA staff incorporated their presentation into a modified Power Point training, focusing on product display restrictions, new laws such as Tobacco 21 and free resources through the Maine Prevention Store. Next, HA staff emailed over 100 retailers in Hancock and Washington Counties to promote the training opportunity. Staff also issued a press release and included a training description in Healthy Acadia’s e-newsletter.

Results/ Success

At the beginning of June, Healthy Acadia hosted its first virtual tobacco retailer training over Zoom. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff had determined a virtual training was optimal. Tobacco prevention staff from both Hancock and Washington counties joined the session. Four retailers attended and HA staff followed up with links to more information and offered free toolkits that are provided by the MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence. WABI-TV5 reached out to HA staff for an interview which was aired on the news.

Sustainability

More virtual tobacco retailer trainings have been scheduled for July and August 2020. Staff will continue to engage in outreach to retailers in Hancock and Washington Counties. Healthy Acadia is in the process of designing an incentive program for a retailer survey that will help us assess how we can best support tobacco retailers with the help of Healthy Communities of the Capital Area.

Reference:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs – 2014*. Section A: State and Community Interventions. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best_practices/pdfs/2014/sectionA-1.pdf. Accessed August 3, 2020.

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