

Outreaching in a new "old" way

Using Postcards to Engage Youth-Serving Organizations and Child Care

Why we focus on youth-serving organizations and child cares

We recognize that children **deserve to learn and play in spaces that promote their health**. We also recognize the important role that youth-serving organizations and childcare facilities play in protecting children from second- and third-hand smoke (toxic residue left on surfaces such as clothing and hair from tobacco smoke) exposure. According to the 2018 Maine Child Care Market Rate Survey, the average child spends 21-30 hours per week in a childcare setting. **Children exposed to second- and third-hand smoke are at a higher risk of health issues**, including Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), severe asthma, and learning disabilities (www.breatheasymaine.org). To promote the health of children early in life, Healthy Androscoggin consistently outreaches and works to engage youth-serving organizations and child cares in tobacco prevention efforts.

Re-evaluating our usual outreach approach

Similar to most industries, the COVID-19 pandemic changed how youth-serving organizations operated. Healthy Androscoggin quickly learned that many of these places were either closed or too overwhelmed to respond to outreach through electronic means. After evaluating various methods of outreach, we decided to try mailing a postcard in June 2020. By having an eye-catching physical reminder, the organizations could hold onto the information until they had the capacity and energy to engage in creating or updating tobacco- and smoke-free policies.

Success seen long after initial outreach

As a result of receiving a postcard in the mail, **three childcare and after-school programs** contacted Healthy Androscoggin for support in establishing tobacco or smoke-free policies for their staff and consumers. We received inquiries as late as February 2021. In total, **50 children, families and community members** are now able to enjoy the benefits of a tobacco- and smoke-free environment! Due to the postcard's positive feedback, we are using this method to further promote tobacco prevention efforts in our community.

2018 Maine Child Care Market Rate Survey report found here:

https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/child_care/ME%20MRS%202018%20Report.pdf

For more information email us at info@healthyandroscoggin.org



MAINE
PREVENTION
SERVICES

Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention
Department of Health and Human Services

