

Recovery Residence Pursues Tobacco-Free Living

At A Glance

The Somerset Public Health (SPH) tobacco prevention program and local recovery residence El Rancho De La Vida team up to promote tobacco-free living for people in recovery by providing smoke-free housing and education on quitting resources.

Public Health Challenge

Somerset County's 2021 report from The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (www.countyhealthrankings.org) shows it has at 26% the highest adult smoking rate in Maine. According to the US CDC website (www.cdc.org) adults with behavioral health conditions like a substance use disorder smoke cigarettes more than adults without these disorders and as a group they consume nearly 40% of all cigarettes smoked by adults, yet only about one-third of substance use disorder treatment facilities report having smoke-free campuses. Studies have shown that the implementation of smoke-free laws and policies can increase cessation.



"A policy to promote recovery from all substances including nicotine, identify accessible quitting resources, and move the possible triggers of smoke and smoking behavior further from a residence is a winning approach, founded in best practices." – Rob Rogers, Dir. of Substance Use Prevention & Grant Services, Kennebec Behavioral Health

Success

ERDLV's director returned the survey via our patient navigator. He had a positive history of working with the Maine QuitLink himself and had checked off all offerings of assistance and education. He was enthusiastic about having printed resources in the house, better smoke- and tobacco-free signage, and strengthening their smoke-free housing policy. A new policy was adopted in February, 2021.



Approach

Many members of the Somerset County Substance Use Task Force (SUTF) have been reluctant to encourage clients who smoke cigarettes to quit at the same time as they are addressing their substance use disorder (SUD). The Recovery Research Institute describes how individuals can be offered smoking cessation during SUD treatment without negatively impacting their substance use outcomes, perhaps even resulting in better outcomes

(<https://www.recoveryanswers.org/research-post/smoking-cessation-addiction/>). SPH's tobacco team regularly attends the SUTF to advocate for tobacco-free living and to promote quitting resources. The Executive Director of El Rancho De La Vida (ERDLV) attends these meetings too. SPH connected with ERDLV by sending a partner interest survey out via the SPH patient navigator who helps connect ERDLV residents with community resources.

Sustainability

Somerset County has only one recovery residence now, but the ERDLV example is one model for outreach via stakeholder groups and community health workers and for engagement that begins and focuses on a partner organization's self-selected interests. The ERDLV engagement has led to training the SPH and other patient navigators from across Maine in Non-Clinical Outreach to be confident in having quitting conversations and making referrals to the Maine QuitLink. This approach could be used with future recovery residences, as well as other shelters and group housing facilities in central Maine.

For More Information:

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