CONNECTING TO THE ARAB AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN CUMBERLAND COUNTY

Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story

AT A GLANCE

Portland Public Health connects with New England Arab American Organization (NEAAO) to disseminate tobacco-related infographics and other resources to the Arabic-speaking community throughout Cumberland County. Information was also shared with the community through workshops and presentations with an Arabic-speaking interpreter.

PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGE

Health disparities have a significant effect on our communities that cannot be ignored. According to the US Census, in 2019 18% of Portland's population and 11-12% of Westbrook and South Portland's population identified as non-white. Due to a variety of systemic factors, social determinants of health of minorities show that these communities are more likely to face health issues. Some of the top immigrant communities in the greater Portland area come from Arab countries and speak Arabic as a first language.

APPROACH

While working with organizations throughout the community, Portland Public Health got creative and found effective approaches to serve minority communities in Cumberland County. In order to connect with various community organizations, Portland Public Health attends networking meetings, such as the CPPC (Community Partnerships for Protecting Children) meetings in Portland, Westbrook, South Portland, and Bridgeton. Through those networking opportunities Portland Public Health was able to connect with New England Arab American Organization (NEAAO). Although COVID-related lockdowns deterred collaborations for some time, they were able to re-connect for NEAAO's health series of workshops.

RESULTS

Portland Public Health and the Opportunity Alliance collaborated on a community presentation about ENDS, vaping nicotine, and marijuana for NEAAO's health series. Arabic-speaking parents were able to tune in with an interpreter to translate the English presentation into Arabic. The parents found the information very helpful and were highly appreciative to learn new trends that may directly or indirectly affect their youth. They asked many questions during the Q&A portion where their voices could be heard through the interpreter. They also asked for resources that could benefit: them, others in their community, and their children as well. Portland Public Health was able to provide resources and informational materials in both English and Arabic. We look forward to continuing our wonderful relationship with NEAAO through our future collaborations!

"Thank you for the very important and critical information about Tabaco and marijuana for participants attending the workshop... We are looking forward to have future partnership to give resources for the community."
-Zoe Sahloul *Executive Director*

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MAINE PREVENTION SERVICES
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