

Great American Smoke Out 2021

Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story

AT A GLANCE

During this past Great American Smoke Out (GASO), the Portland Public Health's (PPH) Tobacco Prevention Team was able to engage with various institutions of higher education and Turner Construction to disseminate resources and provide training seminars on accessing the Maine QuitLink.

..... PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGE

It's estimated that 99% of smokers first try tobacco before age 26. Tobacco use is associated with a multitude of health problems, including (but not limited to) lung cancer, cardiovascular disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and leads to an average of a decade of life lost, so reducing the number of youth and young adults who start smoking is essential. Cigarette smoking among college students is a particularly critical problem due to the high smoking rates in the 18 to 25 age group. Annually, the Great American Smoke Out is an opportunity for Portland Public Health to provide prevention resources to university students and offer trainings on accessing the Maine QuitLink.

APPROACH

During the GASO campaign, our team was able to provide in-person tabling events at Saint Joseph's College, the University of Southern Maine, and Southern Maine Community College. We were also able to provide a special tabling event at Turner Construction's "Don't Be a Bad Apple" wellness event facilitated by Jill Schlegel, the On-Site Nurse for Turner Construction.



..... RESULTS

PPH, over the course of the GASO, was able to reach roughly 3,000 university students across Cumberland County, including future students visiting for their orientation day! Not only were we able to provide resources and information to university students, we facilitated a Quitting Tobacco Together training for several faculty from the University of Southern Maine, and played a pivotal role at Turner Construction's "Don't Be a Bad Apple" wellness event and were able to nominate Jill Schlegel for our Workplace Individual Gold Star Champion Award!

"Their resources are great! There's so much misinformation about vaping, this is information our students need to know."

Faculty Member at the University of Southern Maine