

Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story

Tobacco Quit Kits at Somerset County Jail

Summary

To address high tobacco use rates among our jail population, Somerset Public Health was able to direct free tobacco quit kits, including starter nicotine replacement therapy, to the Somerset County Jail. The jail will make Maine QuitLink referrals and distribute these kits to newly released inmates with co-occurring Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and Tobacco Use Disorder (TUD).

Need/ Issue (or “Challenge”)

The Somerset County Jail is a smoke-free environment, and inmates may have been abstinent for weeks or months during their incarceration. Most resume their tobacco use after release. Many inmates have a co-occurring SUD. According to the CDC, individuals with a SUD are twice as likely to be addicted to nicotine. They are also more likely to die from smoking-related illnesses than their SUD. When individuals with SUD abstain from tobacco, mental health can improve. Abstinence is associated with decreased depression, anxiety, and stress. Those with a history of SUD have a greater chance of staying in recovery longer if they refrain from using tobacco products after their release.



Intervention/ Program Description

The University of Vermont Center on Rural Addiction team presented their tobacco quit kits during a Somerset County Substance Use Task Force meeting. Intended for individuals suffering from TUD and Opioid Use Disorder (OUD), these kits contained nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), a stress ball, chewing gum, lip balm, and information about the Vermont Quitline. Redington-Fairview General Hospital’s Patient Navigator and Somerset Public Health’s Rural Communities Opioid Response Program “Pathways to Recovery (P2R)” staff were already working with the jail to connect newly released inmates with comprehensive materials and information about treatment for SUD. Our tobacco team worked with the Maine Health Center for Tobacco Independence to adapt these quit kits to feature the Maine QuitLink. We collaborated with P2R to establish a procedure for tobacco quit kit distribution. A provider at the jail will screen inmates nearing release to identify those with OUD and TUD who wish to continue their tobacco quit journey with support. These individuals will receive a referral to the Maine QuitLink, the new quit kit, and other resources to address their substance use.

Results/ Success

The tobacco quit kits will help to ensure that newly released inmates are given the best chance at successful tobacco cessation. They will have immediate access to NRT and a referral to the Maine Quit Link for further support. The newly released inmates will also be provided with information about substance use treatment and other resources about local 12 step programs to address their substance use.

For More Information Contact Us At:

Somerset Public Health
Jessica Carter
jcarter@rfgh.net
(207) 858-8456

