

Oxford County Promotes Tobacco Prevention at the Western Maine Recovery Rally

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability and death in the United States.

Over 16 million Americans have at least one disease caused by smoking. This amounts to \$170 billion in direct medical costs that could be saved each year if we could prevent youth from starting smoking and help every person who smokes to quit (CDC).

Healthy Oxford Hills (HOH) participated in a community event on Sunday September 18th, called the Western Maine Recovery Rally. This event occurs every year in September during National Recovery Month (coordinated by the Western Maine Addiction Recovery Initiative) and HOH has had the pleasure of participating for several years. This event promotes recovery efforts and strives to diminish the stigma related to recovery. The Rally entails a march through Norway and South Paris followed by a presentation at Moore Park. This year HOH was able to table along with several other organizations promoting their individual goals and efforts. HOH gave out several materials related to tobacco, such as My Life, My Quit cards, quitting tips pamphlets, Maine QuitLink cards, and more.

This event creates a wonderful opportunity for organizations (like HOH) to get themselves out into the community. These facilities work with the public and since the pandemic, community collaboration has been more challenging. The Rally gives people the ability to promote their work, make themselves known, and allows them the opportunity to support the recovery community. HOH had a very successful time meeting people face to face and sharing information. This event also led to tobacco policy work with the Western Maine Addiction Recovery Initiative (WMARI)!

"This year we were pleased to have Anna Warren, Substance Use and Prevention Coordinator for Healthy Oxford Hills, tabling at the 6th Annual Western Maine Recovery Rally to provide attendees with information and resources about tobacco use. An adult with substance use disorder (SUD) is 3-4 times more likely to smoke than someone who doesn't have SUD. Many people in SUD treatment or recovery want to quit smoking, and WMARI believes giving individuals information on how to work towards that is a great first step. In addition, the resource table allows people to have conversations about tobacco use and ask questions. "

-Kari Taylor
WMARI Director



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