

Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story: Community-wide Focus on St. George

Summary:

After the St. George Municipal School Unit adopted a model vape/tobacco-free policy last year, the Knox County Community Health Coalition decided to promote a community-wide effort to reduce tobacco exposure in St. George. Therefore, it contacted the Town of St. George and the local Land Trust to encourage them to also adopt policies. In September 2022, the Town of St. George adopted a Vape- and Tobacco-Free Town Resolution banning smoking and vaping in town offices and community recreation areas.

Challenges

Fishermen/women have high rates of smoke exposure compared to rates in many professions. They report a 45% smoking rate and 25% second-hand smoke exposure (Doza et.al., *J Agromedicine* 2022 July: 27(3): 284-291). Expanding tobacco-free environments in communities with high concentrations of fishermen/women can reduce their smoke exposure and promote healthy, tobacco-free life styles.

“It will be much easier (and just as effective) for the Select Board to adopt a resolution that covers all town properties than an ordinance. We are excited to use the mini grant for anti-smoking initiatives.”
Rick Erb, St. George Town Manager

Results/Success

The Town of St. George passed a smoke/vape-free resolution, and the St. George Municipal School Unit passed a policy to protect people in St. George from tobacco exposure. The Georges River Land Trust is considering a policy now.



Last year, the St. George Municipal School Unit passed a model vape/tobacco-free policy. The Knox County Community Health Coalition then reached out to St. George’s new town manager to encourage a town tobacco-free resolution to create a community-wide healthier environment. The resolution was adopted in September 2022. Currently, the Georges River Land Trust, which includes several trails and public access in the St. George area, is considering a smoke/vape-free policy as well. This will provide smoke-free environments throughout the Town of St. George, which includes the villages of Tenants Harbor, Port Clyde, Martinsville, Clark Island, Spruce Head, Glenmere, and Elmore. Marshall Point Lighthouse, which was featured in the movie *Forest Gump* as the “end of the road” for Forest’s long run, is a popular tourist destination in St. George (pictured). St. George has about 3,000 year-round residents but swells to 7,000 in the summer. The fishing industry remains one of the community’s largest employment sectors.

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KNOX COUNTY
Community Health
Coalition



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