

Andrew County Health Department Community Report

KEY HEALTH ISSUE AND IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

Prevent and reduce smoking and secondhand smoking exposure.

Statement of problem: Smoking during pregnancy causing a significant risk factors for poor birth outcomes, high infant mortality rates and detrimental to mothers health.

Andrew County community has a high incidence of heart disease, respiratory disorders and lung cancer and tobacco use is linked to causing all three diseases.

Adolescents are starting to use tobacco at an early age. Several contributing factors starting at state and local levels because of low tax on tobacco and little funding for tobacco prevention programs to help educate school aged children and adults.

Target populations for intervention: Our main focus will be school aged children to prevent the initiation of tobacco usage. This effort will also give us opportunity to educate the public and change attitudes about tobacco before pregnancy.

According to Mica Intervention strategies, programs that include a component focusing on peer and influences have been shown to positively affect adolescent smoking. Also access barriers and price increases are recommended as effective interventions

The first year of the action plan we started working more closely with the NWMO Tobacco Coalition to learn about the best practiced tobacco prevention programs that are out there to implement in to the schools. To continue Tar Wars programs in 4th and 5th grades class rooms in the elementary schools, start new programs like TATU in the Middle schools and expand Smoke Busters programs in the high schools.

That goal was accomplished with all the schools in Andrew County continuing to utilize the Tar Wars program. We evaluate the program with a pre and post test and a questionnaire for students about smoking in the household provided by American Family of Physicians. We also have the students involved in an anti-smoking poster contest evaluated by the state and over 80% of the students participated in the poster contest and had a poster winner from Andrew County go to Washington D.C. to represent the state of Missouri. We started the evidenced based tobacco prevention program TATU (Teens Against Tobacco Use) in all of the Andrew County Middle schools and continued the Smoke Busters group in one of the High Schools which now has a tobacco free policy for their school grounds. These groups are trained in tobacco prevention and they must complete 3 action projects that educate their peers, adults and community members.

The second year of the action plan was to again continue working with NWMO Tobacco Coalition and continue with the evidence based tobacco prevention programs in the Andrew County school system. The plan was to re-approach the nonparticipating schools and try to better educate school facility about the program and the impact that it could have on the students, school and community.

That goal was accomplished with all the Andrew County elementary schools still very much involve in the Tar Wars program. The 2nd year of TATU was even better with more students volunteering to be a part of the program. We had a meeting with the Principal of the Savannah High School and Avenue City Principal and both school agreed if they could get someone within the school to do the program and meet with the group in school

to continue the three step process they would consider the program. Both schools were able to recruit teachers/and or counselors to organize the program. Smoke Busters was then improved by adding two more schools to be involved with that program. This was the first year to have a Youth Summit and Tobacco Use Prevention Conference where there were around 500 high school students in attendance from Missouri. Two of the high school smoke busters groups from Andrew County were able to send 7 students to the conference. It was very educational and the students brought back a lot of information to share with the rest of the groups.

The Andrew County Health Department Health Educator continues to be involved in the NWMO Tobacco Coalition meetings and attend other tobacco educational programs like MO. Model for Brief Smoking Cessation Training and Clean Air Kansas City Summit to learn more about how to better educate the public. She is now a certified Freedom From Smoking Facilitator through American Lung Association and involved in the Clean Air St. Joe to better understand the process in helping Andrew County to become smoke free. We continue to educate the public through health fairs, educational material sent home with the youth programs, through offering smoking cessation classes to the public and is being addressed through the WIC program. We continue to encourage community policy changes by addressing tobacco issues, encouraging and supporting tax increases and discouraging smoking in all populations. The two grocery stores in the community display no smoking signs and the bowling ally has designated days and times when smoking is not allowed.

Key Community Organizations:

The Andrew County Community is a rural area so the Andrew County Health Department has partners in the community and with local organizations to help complete the tobacco use prevention educational process. Among the partners are Andrew County School Districts, Local Police Department, NW Health Services, Heartland Regional Medical Center, NWMO Tobacco Coalition, American Lung Association, and the Department of Health and Senior Services.

As a part of the collaboration the Health Educator of the Health Department meets with the NWMO Tobacco Coalition group which is made up of Heartland Regional Medical Center leaders, Department of Health and Senior Services repetitive, surrounding area Health Departments, Youth Alliance representatives, community people who are interested educating the public, leaders from University of Columbia Campus and a representative from the group STAND which is a MWSU group that we are helping to make MWSU campus become smoke –free. NWMSU also has a group that was started in 2008 to help their campus go smoke-free

This committee meets monthly to go over ideas, plan tobacco youth programs and public educational events. This committee also applies for various grants for additional funding to help support the evidence based tobacco youth programs and the work we do in the communities. From this group we have developed another action group called Clean Air St. Joseph which was started in the Fall of 2008 to help St. Joe go smoke –free and help us learn the process to use in educating our community to go smoke-free in the near future.

Measuring Outcomes:

We evaluate the programs by giving pre and post test to elementary students showing growth in learning what was taught during the program and then following up in one month and evaluating by asking a series of questions about the program and how they were able to utilize the information they learned to talk to their peers, parents and or other people in the community. Some of the students have some really good personal stories they shared about how they feel they helped a love one make a decision to quit smoking. They are also giving a questionnaire given to fill out that was provided by the American Academy of Family

Physicians that asks about smoking in the home. I have been keeping the data from that questionnaire to help measure the educational longevity of this program in the homes.

It will take several years to gather real data but along with this program and the other programs combined and continually educating the students through middle school and high school and now the college programs we can help the students and parents to make a clear and educational decision to not use tobacco.

The middle school and high school programs are measures by doing three action plan projects that they have to do educating their peers, community, school boards, public officials and businesses.

They work on policy change, working with the media and environmental and policy changes. They learn to make speeches and have leadership responsibilities and most of all they learn that they can make a difference.

They have to fill out a program document along with pictures and if they had media coverage (newspaper articles, T.V. coverage, radio). If they went to a board meeting or city council meeting they have to document what their plan was and the outcome.

Informing the Public:

The Health Educator displays the results from the Tar Wars in the public area of the Health Department and on our new website, the number of students that participated in the program and how they did as a group on the tests and how many used their skills in the one/two month period.

The media has been a resource we use to inform the public of events that we have to further educate the students outside the class room, like the Kick Butt Dodgeball Tournament we started last year and are having again on March 25, Kick Butts Day. We have fun with the students 6th – 12 grades while educating them about tobacco. We are able to again meet with the students who volunteer to be in the tobacco prevent programs and it helps use to reach out to the students that are reluctant to participate and parents are invited as well. The nurses continue to work with and educate the WIC clients to reduce the smoking rate among pregnant women in Andrew County area.

The Andrew County Health Department website @ andrewcountyhealth.com displays Restaurants and eating establishments that are smoke-free in our community. We have another restaurant that is going smoke-free as of March 15, 2009.

The Health Educator is currently working on a page for the website telling about all the tobacco prevention programs and pictures. It will also have information from the state about bills on tobacco taxes and how to reach Missouri Representatives.

It will also display statistics that pertain to Chronic Disease caused or contributed by smoking in Andrew County.

The health educator was approached about doing cessation classes for the Savannah School district which is qualified to do through her Freedom From Smoking Training.

We were recently sent information to share with the public 18- 30 years of age about a quit smoking study class from the National Cancer Institute and are glad to get that information out to the public.

Conclusion:

The Andrew County Health Department has planned and followed through with the evidenced based tobacco prevention programs and implemented new programs in elementary, middle school and high school levels in all of the schools in the Andrew County area.

We plan to continue the programs for years to come in order to reach our ultimate goal of reducing tobacco use in Andrew County and surrounding areas. We will continue our partnership with the NWMO Tobacco Coalition and other community groups to help in the funding, and development of additional evidence based tobacco use prevention programs.

We are always looking for education to share with the public.

Our plan is to make our county smoke free in the near future.