

# Smoke-free Public Housing: HELPING SMOKERS QUIT

## E-newsletter #7, October 2020

### The Results

It has been 9 months since our last newsletter. The communities involved in the initiative were wrapping up local work right as COVID-19 swept the nation, which resulted in a lot of altered plans. Regardless, the health centers, public housing agencies, and quitlines doubled down as soon as it was safe and made plans to continue or expand this work. For more information, contact [Becky Slemons](mailto:Becky.Slemons) or visit [smokefreePHA.org](http://smokefreePHA.org).

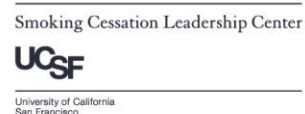
### The Recap

- Smoke-free Public Housing: Helping Smokers Quit is a collaboration of the [American Cancer Society](#), [North American Quitline Consortium](#), and the [Smoking Cessation Leadership Center at the University of California, San Francisco](#), generously funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Aimed to increase access to tobacco cessation services for residents of public housing in wake of the US Department of Housing and Development (HUD) smoke-free rule
- Took place in 7 communities nationwide: San Francisco, California; Winter Haven, Florida; Louisville, Kentucky; St. Louis, Missouri; Long Island City, New York; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Florence, South Carolina
- States and communities were chosen based on a variety of factors including percentage of smokers in the population, percentage of the population who are public housing residents, availability of government-related resources, geographical diversity, and quitline capacity
- 5 sites worked comprehensively with community health centers (CHCs), public housing agencies (PHAs), and state health departments/quitlines, while 2 sites primarily focused on the CHC but included the PHA's informal collaboration
- Kicked off in January 2019 and continued through spring 2020
- Built around a model of cross-sector collaboration with community health centers, public housing agencies, and state quitlines
- Local community collaboration broke down barriers to help public housing residents (and all other patients at their health center) know about and can access evidence-based tobacco cessation services
- [Smoke-free Public Housing ECHO sessions](#) (a virtual tele-mentoring model) took place every 2 weeks featuring an instructive presentation by a subject matter expert; individual or systems case presentation, followed by expert recommendations and all-participant best practice sharing; and community updates



### The Best Practices

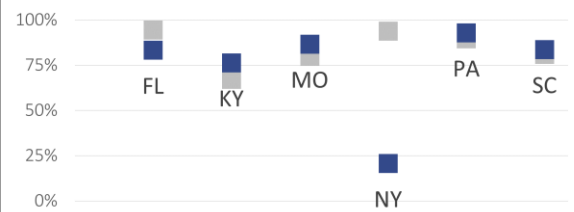
In short: we know that public housing administrators and front-line health care providers can help people access smoking cessation services. They can raise awareness, provide or refer to resources, and engage residents—including resident councils. However, there are large gaps in knowledge and capacity to do so, and there are barriers to improvement that present themselves, including staff turnover, electronic health record data issues, and competing priorities. There were many lessons learned that can lead to internal improvements and increase collaboration among sectors:



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- The use of the virtual tele-mentoring Project ECHO model to foster cross-sector collaboration and regular team meetings led to an open flow of information that removed siloes and reduced barriers to residents accessing care
- Point-of-contact “champions” in each sector ensured accountability
- Regular training is essential, especially in light of staff turnover
  - Staff at CHCs can benefit from learning more about quitlines, cessation medications/nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and motivational interviewing to encourage patients to consider quitting tobacco
  - Non-primary care should be included in cessation efforts, including dental staff,
  - Staff at PHAs can be trained on the smoke-free rule and the importance of establishing healthy communities as well as how to best interact with residents who violate the smoke-free rule
  - All staff can benefit from basic tobacco knowledge and education is an essential part of success
- CHCs can improve workflows and processes without wholesale changes or additional budget
  - Medical assistants and other non-clinical staff can be included in the workflow to help connect patients to resources, including calling the state quitline with the patient in the office
  - Primary care team collaboration with behavioral health team can lead to regular counseling to help patients quit
  - “Opt-out” procedures in which a patient must decline referral to a quitline rather than ignoring a passive referral can increase quitline usage, which includes free connection to a quit coach and other resources, including NRT
  - Working directly with quitlines may lead to more streamlined referral processes and the ability to establish a feedback loop where providers can find out if patients have used quitline services
  - Even brief reminders to clinical staff during morning huddles or scheduled trainings keep cessation screening and intervention top-of-mind
- In PHAs, a message of community health and sincere staff concern for residents who have violated the smoke-free rule can make all the difference
- Helping patients/residents understand that quitting is a journey can make them feel more open to a quit attempt
- Consider community patient/resident profiles to offer culturally sensitive resources in several languages
- Classes, health fairs, and other events will be more successful if they take part on-site at the PHA; while finding space can be an issue, a relationship with PHA administration can help ensure cessation work is a priority
- Consider which other community organizations can strengthen this work and/or share resources with their constituents, including legal aid groups, cancer screening or treatment offices, smoke-free housing or smoke-free air groups, and more

**Screening Cessation Intervention measure** increased by 2.90 percentage points overall, from a **baseline** of 82.22% to a **final** of 85.12%.



Source: Self-reported community health center data. CA excluded.

From January 2019-February 2020  
Measures % of CHC patients screened for tobacco use who received tobacco cessation intervention if identified as smoker  
CA excluded due to data deletion after EHR migration



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We've created 3 case studies to better illustrate how cross-sector collaboration may provide a template for and/or inspiration to break down or transcend local barriers to access to tobacco cessation resources. [San Francisco, California](#); [Louisville, Kentucky](#); and [Florence, South Carolina](#), are three very different communities with different resources and patient/resident populations. You can read more about how each community health center, public housing agency, and quitline approached the initiative, identified internal needs and barriers, then learned to work together to form a circle of support for residents of public housing considering a quit attempt. Of course, the planning and learning from this grant led to new workflows and processes helping other health center patients as well.

**For a more detailed view of both patient and systems-based challenges, please view the [case presentation videos](#) from the initiative's biweekly [Project ECHO](#) sessions [and read the additional best practices](#) we've captured.**

## The Resources

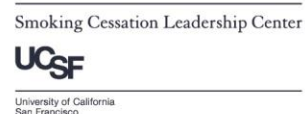
Visit our [best practices document](#) for lessons learned from this initiative, and the [NAQC page on this topic](#), which includes links to their case study on the SFPH work and resource directories created for the communities, plus how to request a resource directory template. Other helpful resources are:

### Smoke-free public housing resources

- [smokefreePHA.org](#) – SFPH program site, printable resources, clips to ECHO didactics and case presentations, links to helpful sites, and more
- [Mnsmokefreehousing.org](#) – tools, resources, printable materials, staff training, technical assistance for housing managers
- [NCHPH.org](#) – guides, webinars, and resources for health centers to help with implementation
- [Lung.org](#) – American Lung Association has factsheets, videos of success stories, and more for smoke-free multifamily housing
- [NHLP.org](#) – National Housing Law Project for healthy housing legal questions or assistance

### Cessation resources for the general public

- [Local community health center](#) can offer care, support, connection to local resources, NRT, regardless of ability to pay
- 1-800-QUIT-NOW connects callers with their state quitline, a FREE tobacco cessation service
  - Cessation counselor, a personalized quit plan and self-help materials, social support and coping strategies to help deal with cravings, and the latest information about cessation medications; callers may get free NRT, and many quitlines offer texting programs
- [Cdc.gov/tips](#) - CDC Tips campaign site with posters, videos, flyers, and more to encourage quit attempts
- [State or county health department](#) for local resources, services, materials
- Smokefree.gov - National Cancer Institute
  - [Text program](#) including customized programs for veterans, Spanish speakers, women, teens, and older people who smoke
  - [Mobile phone apps](#)
  - [Support through social media](#)



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## Cessation resources for health care professionals

- [CDC Tips campaign site](#) with posters, videos, flyers, and more to encourage quit attempts
- [CDC's Million Hearts Toolkit](#) – QI for cessation treatment in healthcare settings
- [American Lung Association](#) – for materials, Freedom From Smoking program, etc.
- Smoking Cessation Leadership Center – [Toolkits for providers](#) and [Fact Sheets and resources for providers](#)
- [USPSTF Final Recommendation Statement on Cessation for Adults](#)
- [North American Quitline Consortium map](#): State quitline program details for every state in the country, including how to refer patients
- American College of Cardiology [tobacco cessation guide and workflow process](#)
- [NAQC Resource Directories for 5 quitlines for this SFPH initiative and a template to create your own resource directory](#)

Resources were available during the 2019 Great American Smokeout in Lancaster, PA



Curry Senior Center found a fun way to educate clients



Louisville HA residents who took steps to quit smoking received shout-outs and trophies



Florence, SC, showed up beautifully to help residents quit smoking



The cold weather didn't cool enthusiasm for the Great American Smokeout in St. Louis, MO

