

TOBACCO PREVENTION INITIATIVE WORK/PROJECT AREA:

Addressing secondhand smoke, tobacco cessation, youth prevention and health disparities in worksites through organizational and policy change

The Tobacco Prevention Initiative identifies and works with medium to large size employers that are ready to implement system-wide changes to support employee tobacco cessation and smoke/tobacco free worksites (campus/grounds). These activities are promoted in the larger context of worksite wellness to include all healthy life choices, not only the choice to be tobacco free. *We seek opportunities to work with employers who serve people who are disproportionately burdened by health disparities.*

Community partners include:

Jefferson Center for Mental Health: Provides technical assistance, education and resources around various worksite wellness issues

Jefferson County Schools' Comprehensive Wellness/Tobacco Prevention Program: Collaborates with the team to address the workforce of Jefferson County Public Schools.

Highlights of accomplishments of 2007-2008 grant year:

- Worked with a total of 10 major and mid-sized employers to raise awareness about tobacco-related issues in their companies. Assisted with policy strengthening and promoted tobacco cessation and wellness resources with three major employers, including Exempla Lutheran Medical Center (which implemented a tobacco-free campus policy on July 3, 2008), the City of Golden, Jefferson County Public Schools, and Jefferson County Government.
- Designed and drafted a tool-kit that will assist companies of all sizes to walk through a policy implementation process which includes assessment of readiness, resources and needs, increasing employee involvement in the policy change process, and guiding HR professionals in working with their health insurance carriers to coordinate their benefits packages to promote wellness and tobacco-free living through incentives-based strategies.
- Provided cessation, chew tobacco and second hand smoke information to numerous employers in Jefferson County.

How we accomplish this work:

We work with employers to-

- assess readiness to implement system change and policy-related strategies
- identify key staff with whom work; create a workgroup representative of the employer's staff
- provide education and training to key decision makers as well as general staff
- provide technical assistance around the development, implementation and enforcement of policies which encourage social norms which support health and reduce the use and impact of tobacco
- provide educational materials/resources to address an array of tobacco control and wellness issues
- support the organization in building and sustaining capacity to address tobacco and wellness issues.

Challenges: Identifying and accessing key people in an organization that have enough time, influence and investment to work on tobacco control and wellness issues is a challenge. Additionally, understanding the culture and potential of diverse workplaces in order to assist the employees and administration in understanding the value of investing energy in tobacco control activities can be challenging.

Highlights of plans for 2008-2009 grant year:

- Build and empower a workgroup of the Tobacco-free Jeffco Coalition to support worksite tobacco control activities
- identify other major and mid-size employers with interest in change in the area of tobacco control.
- Continue and increase partnerships and support for worksite wellness and tobacco prevention. Work with major employers such as Exempla Lutheran Medical Center and Jefferson County Public Schools to extend their tobacco control and wellness activities and to encourage other employers to benefit from the achievements and lessons learned from these organizations. Work with ELMC to publish articles about their policy change process in relevant journals and other periodicals
- Provide resources and technical assistance on an ongoing basis
- Advocate for and assist with strengthening tobacco policy language and enforcement as well as addressing signage gaps at Jefferson County buildings/campuses

How can Tobacco-free Jeffco Coalition support these activities?

- if your employer may be interested in/ready for information about or assistance with making positive, system-wide changes in the area of tobacco control, please contact us
- your ideas about and/or contacts for major/medium size employers in Jefferson County are very helpful
- if you have creative ideas for marketing to and reaching these employers, we'd love to work with you.
- if you have experience with wellness strategies/programs, understanding employer benefits or have a greater interest in addressing tobacco control needs in the workplace, please consider joining the workgroup.

Please contact Flo Cisan at (303) 275-7509 or fdjcisan@jeffco.us for more information and idea-sharing.