

TOBACCO PREVENTION INITIATIVE WORK/PROJECT AREA:

Addressing tobacco-free schools policy, youth access to tobacco and youth tobacco prevention, cessation and secondhand smoke exposure.

The Tobacco Prevention Initiative (TPI) works in collaboration with school and community partners to reduce the use and impact of tobacco on youth. We do this through strategies which help produce social norm change. Our focus is to produce system-wide changes, including policy implementation, to reduce youth access to and use of tobacco products, and create opportunities for youth empowerment. This work includes a vital relationship with the JeffCo Schools and *a commitment to address the needs of youth and school communities disproportionately burdened by health disparities.*

Community Partners Include:

- JeffCo School's Wellness/Tobacco Prevention Program – Judy Hindman's leadership and commitment to our partnership has helped to greatly forward tobacco control and wellness efforts in schools
- JeffCo School's Safe & Drug Free Schools Program – VJ Johnston
- Jefferson Center for Mental Health (JCMH) – partnership efforts with JCMH have helped reach youth in priority schools as well as District employees.
- Rocky Mountain Center for Health Promotion and Education (RMC) – funder of Jeffco Schools' comprehensive K-12 tobacco prevention project
- Get R!EAL Colorado - Heather Kennedy and her co-workers support youth empowerment efforts in our county as well as to lead the way with youth access policy advocacy efforts
- American Lung Association's Not on Tobacco (NOT) Program – a major resource for schools, providing funding to implement school-based cessation programs

Accomplishments of 2007-2008 Grant Year:

- Supported the work of District's Wellness/Tobacco Prevention Program (Judy Hindman), resulting in all high schools having multiple staff trained in NOT and able to offer school-based cessation for students
- In collaboration with the Wellness/Tobacco Prevention Program, trained 12 students in Tobacco 101, secondhand smoke, industry marketing tactics, refusal skills, etc., to become leaders of the Breathe Easy Team ("BE" Team – a youth empowerment coalition); these students represent 3 priority high schools and reached youth in three priority elementary schools.
- Provided technical assistance to the SWAT (Students Working Against Tobacco) team at Wheat Ridge High School; engaged youth from various groups in this school to find solutions around tobacco use by students on/adjacent to campus
- Provided training on tobacco control issues to leaders of student gay/straight alliances
- Conducted tobacco-free schools policy checklist assessments with 8 schools, providing technical assistance and follow-up to support positive change
- Worked with JCMH, Jeffco Schools' Employee Assistance Program and the Wellness/Tobacco Prevention Program to reach and serve hundreds of District employees with tobacco information and employee wellness resources
- Received the Excellence in Tobacco Prevention "Outstanding Partnership" Award from the State Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (STEPP) and RMC for our work with Judy Hindman and the Jeffco Schools' Wellness/Tobacco Prevention Program

How We Accomplish This Work:

- Provide technical assistance and training to school staff and administrators, youth coalitions, and county government to support the implementation of tobacco control interventions.
- Participate in planning meetings to ensure the effectiveness and reach of school-based tobacco control activities.
- Collaborate and provide resources with advocates of LGBTQ youth/young adults to address the tobacco control issues that affect LGBTQ youth in Jefferson County.
- Conduct outreach activities and presentations to educate the community on the importance of comprehensive tobacco prevention in schools.
- Provide opportunities for youth empowerment by supporting youth coalitions such as Get R!eal.

Challenges:

Increases in youth/young adult-targeted tobacco marketing tactics, as well as an increase in access to tobacco products through the proliferation of hookah bars, tobacco product sampling, discount coupon distribution, etc., are growing challenges. Building support for policies and laws which focus on the root causes of tobacco use and hold all entities equally accountable for youth access is also a challenge. Working with and for youth to impact social norms around tobacco and to provide alternative solutions to the problems that face our communities is essential.

Highlights of plans for 2008-2009 grant year:

- Continue collaborative work with partners to address youth tobacco use through schools, youth serving agencies and communities
- Increase the recruitment of the BE Team members and provide effective training and support for these youth leaders
- Conduct a minimum of 8 tobacco-free schools policy checklists in priority schools and provide follow up and technical assistance to implement positive changes
- Continue to support the expansion and effectiveness of NOT programs in schools
- Identify and contact new community partners, such as youth sports leagues to begin addressing tobacco control issues in these groups
- Increase our number of community partners to include other youth development and empowerment groups.
- Engage youth in effective strategies to positively impact community and social norms around tobacco control priorities.
- Conduct outreach to and support effective strategy implementation with educational programs serving the young adult population (secondary campuses, vocational/technical schools, etc.)

What You Can Do:

We are always looking for new opportunities to support youth in their interests around civic involvement, social justice and leadership skills building. If you or your organization is interested in or has opportunities, we would love to hear from you. Similarly, if you have ideas about or wish to participate in activities to reduce youth access to tobacco products we want to hear from you. Lastly, we need your help in educating others broadening our coalition. If you know of an individual or organization that is interested in ready to support our efforts around tobacco control issues affecting youth, please contact Jeremy Vann at (303) 275-7556 or jvann@jeffco.us.