

**TOBACCO PREVENTION INITIATIVE WORK/PROJECT AREA:**  
**Activities to reduce secondhand smoke exposure in homes**

The Tobacco Prevention Initiative works in collaboration with coalitions, other tobacco control programs and community partners to conduct educational interventions, public information, training and technical assistance which forward social norm change including formal and informal policies which reduce exposure to SHS in the home environment. *We seek opportunities to serve people who are disproportionately burdened by health disparities.*

**Community partners include:**

Colorado Alliance for Smoke-Free Housing, CASH - focusing on multi-unit housing, the CASH Coalition is a primary partner in advocating for policies which make multi-unit housing (MUH) smoke-free.

Smoke-Free Housing Action Committee, SHAC- a group of statewide partners supporting smoke-free housing efforts; this group is coordinated by GASP (Group to Alleviate Smoking Pollution) and includes housing industry representatives, tenants, representatives from health disparity populations and local tobacco control programs.

Denver Public Health/Denver Alliance for Tobacco and Health – working together to form the Smoke-Free Housing Forum – a forum for tenants and property owners to work toward formal policies to assure smoke-free MUH housing in the greater Metro area.

Children and Second Hand Smoke Coalition – representatives from multiple organizations, including healthcare/hospital systems and public health, working to increase education and resources to protect children in all homes from exposure to SHS.

**Highlights of accomplishments of 2007-2008 grant year:**

- Launched the CASH Coalition in August of 2007; have provided support for the Steering Committee and community education efforts. A mobile educational display was created for use in community settings to raise awareness about the dangers of SHS in homes and MUH.
- Working with several MUH complexes, including Eaton Terrace Residences, a Section 8 complex serving seniors; Eaton Terrace plans to become a smoke-free facility Sept. 1, 2008.
- The Tobacco Prevention Initiative's SHS MUH program is listed in the global directory for SHS and MUH resources, a web-based resource for residents and property owners/managers.
- Established a relationship with Lakewood Housing Authority and have begun work with two MUH complexes under the Authority, Willow Glen and Residence of Creekside, to support them in going smoke-free.
- Assisted with surveys in several MUH complexes to assess residents' and general public perceptions, needs and readiness for policy change around smoking in residential units.
- Supported community and coalition members in submitting articles and letters to the editor (LTE) around SHS exposure issues. CASH Coalition members had a LTE published in the Denver Post with subsequent letters in the online and hard copy editions of "Your Hub", addressing on SHS and MUH.
- Provided training and technical assistance to healthcare and childcare providers to increase interventions with families which reduce SHS in homes and autos
- Provided a user-friendly website "tool kit" for residents, property owners/managers and Section 8 properties on SHS and MUH.

**How we accomplish this work:**

- working with CASH, SHAC and other partners we raise awareness about the issue of SHS in MUH and organize policy advocacy and educational campaigns to gain support for social norm and policy change.
- provide education, training, resources and technical assistance to service providers, property owners and tenants to build capacity and momentum for change to reduce SHS exposure in homes.
- expand the network of resources and organizations actively working to reduce SHS in homes.

**Challenges:**

- Addressing SHS in MUH is a new area of tobacco control and frequently meets with significant resistance because it “crosses the line” into what people do in their homes versus public places.
- Addressing the misconceptions of property owners, particularly low income/Section 8 property owners, about the legality of implementing smoke-free policies has also been challenging.
- Gaining supporters of smoke-free housing policies among major, influential property owners has been also challenge; as support for these policies grows, we will likely see sweeping change; until then, tenants exposed to SHS struggle with continuous health problems and feelings of disempowerment.
- Reaching tenants who can dedicate the time and energy needed to support coalition and advocacy efforts has been difficult. Those who suffer from SHS exposure may have serious and worsening health conditions, making it difficult to fully participate.

**Highlights of plans for 2008-2009 grant year:**

- Conduct outreach and education to raise awareness about the benefits of strengthening smoke-free public places laws, including multi-unit housing.
- Implement a questionnaire with a minimum of 50 MUH complex owners to assess interest, needs and readiness regarding implementation of smoke-free MUH complex policies.
- Based on survey results, work with property owners and residents to draft plans for adopting smoke-free housing policies.
- Provide individual technical assistance to a minimum of 20 residents and /or owners/managers of MUH complexes.
- Promote voluntary smoke-free homes and autos as well as formal smoke-free MUH policies through information booths, educational presentations, etc., targeting priority populations.
- Assist CASH with strategic planning to identify and take priority action steps to increase the number of MUH complexes moving toward implementation of smoke-free housing policies.

**How you can support these activities:**

- Identifying multi-unit property managers/owners that may be interested in implementing a smoke free policy at their complex.
- Identifying residents who may want to host a CASH meeting at their MUH
- Creative ideas for increasing public awareness around SHS issues, including MUH SHS issues
- Consider writing an article or LTE about SHS issues.
- Volunteer with health/community fairs and other events to increase public awareness.

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