exposure.

The Newsletter of the Tobacco Free Task Force in Washington County

Issue: Ask and Advise, 2006

Why Clinician Advice is Important

In 2002, a survey by Washington County Health Partners (WCHP) was conducted to determine tobacco usage among Washington County residents.

Of 205,738 Washington County Residents, an estimated 19.3% or 39,707 people were identified as tobacco users.

76.9% or 30,535 people expressed either an interest in quitting tobacco or weren't sure.

National surveys estimate 70% of the population will see a physician each year, and an estimated 2.3% will quit tobacco use on advice from their doctors.

If that rate was applied to the local statistics from the survey, 492 persons could become tobacco free.

Systems to help health care professionals educate patients are in place locally. Attendees at the **Ask and Advise** meeting learned about the options and how they work.

Washington County Presenters

Kim Soles, Clean Air for Healthy Children
Part of the American Academy of Pediatrics, The Clean Air for Healthy Children Program is a smoking cessation training program that does on-site training for physicians, other health care professionals, and health care agencies.

It is primarily focused on patients who are pregnant, mothers and caregivers of young children and teens.

Kim Soles

"We want to motivate smokers to quit smoking but we know all smokers aren't ready to fully quit smoking," said Soles.

The program uses the "5As" principle of working toward its objective:

- Ask-Patients about their smoking status;
- Advise-Patients with a clear recommendation to quit smoking;
- Assess-Patients with a plan to quit, based on their level of readiness;
- Assist-Patients with materials and referrals to make changes; and
- Arrange-For follow-up with the patient.

AskandAdvise

February 24, 2006 Tobacco Free Task Force Meeting
Issue: Ask and Advise
Ask and Advise collaborates with health care professionals to implement a system to identify and help tobacco users to quit.

Meeting Highlights
- The importance of clinician advice to quit using tobacco
- The Five "A"s
- Patient tobacco use tracking systems

Guest Speakers
- Kim Soles, Clean Air for Healthy Children
- Rita Simko Stotka, Centerville Clinics
- Rita Donatelli & Kathy Higgins, The Washington Hospital
- Anita Leonard, Monongahela Valley Hospital

Next Tobacco Free Task Force Meeting...

Friday, March 24, 2006
9-11 a.m.
Presbyterian SeniorCare
Hillsview Chapel Meditation Area
Washington, PA

Next Issue:
Review Assessment Data

Fast Facts

Philip Morris ads on WebMD
WebMD, one of the internet's biggest sources of basic medical information, now has Philip Morris advertising on the site's smoking cessation pages.

The banner style ads promote "QuitAssist," a smoking cessation guide by Philip Morris, an information program put out by the tobacco company and not endorsed or approved by any medical or public health associations.

Send a message to WebMD to express your feelings about Philip Morris' ads running on their site.

Use the "Contact Us" section of WebMD's site then click on "Customer Support"then "General Comments" and let them know how you feel about the "QuitAssist" ads.

Sources: WebMD and Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids

Want More Ask and Advise Information?
For more information about Ask and Advise, please visit the Tobacco Free Program web site at: www.tobaccofreewashington.org

Reference materials, local tobacco cessation program contact information, and community resources are available.

Be sure to check out the rest of our website while you are there.

AskandAdvise

Washington County Presenters

"Many health care professionals ask patients about their tobacco use status and advise them to quit but don't go a step further," said Soles.

Another options to the "5As" is the "2As & the R," which stands for Ask, Advise, and Refer. Centerville Clinics is using this model.

There are several versions of the training, based on the convenience level of those receiving it. There is a three-hour training, the most comprehensive, which is usually offered to health care agencies. The 1 to 1.5 hour training module is often provided to physician's offices where they often don't have the time to close for very long. There are also other training modules, the most common is the teleconference.

Patients in the program receive follow-up at 2, 6 and 12 months. According to data from 9,882 patients who self-reported their tobacco use status from 12/31/1997 to 1/31/2006, 25% had quit (for 12 months or longer); 14% were recent quitters (less than 12 months); 19% had reduced their tobacco usage by 40% or more; 38% made no change, and 3% had made changes but had relapsed.

The training program involves the creation of a quit smoking team. "Everyone needs to get involved in what that patient does. It can't be a hit or miss thing."

The training is free. For more information, Ms. Soles can be reached at (724) 327-2756 or by e-mail at kimpaap@alltel.net.

Rita Simko Stotka, Centerville Clinics
The tobacco use status of patients seen at the Centerville Clinics' locations throughout Washington County are assessed by medical assistants. "The patients are assigned a sticker, designating them as smokers or non-smokers. We've been tracking that since we began (tobacco cessation programs) four years ago."

Rita Simko Stotka

Stickers indicating their tobacco usage are put on patient charts and physicians can refer patients to Ms. Simko Stotka for cessation treatment.

The newest status about to be measured is the patient's exposure to secondhand smoke.

Such exposure is clearly a health risk of its own, and patients need to be educated about its dangers. WCHP's Smoke-Free Home & Vehicle Pledge Kit has that information and is available to all Washington County Residents.

The challenge in implementing the measurement of secondhand smoke exposure is to distinguish what level of exposure is involved, whether it is in the patient's home or vehicle, or work environment. The measurement has to be the same for every patient.

When the measuring of secondhand smoke status gets underway, according to Stotka, it will likely begin in Centerville Clinic's Washington office and move out to other their other locations in Washington County.

Washington County Presenters (cont.)

Rita Donatelli & Kathy Higgins, The Washington Hospital
Patients admitted to The Washington Hospital are queried as to their tobacco use status. Pediatric patients are assessed for their secondhand smoke exposure. A risk assessment form is generated, based on the patient's response to the questions and they are further assessed by Ms. Higgins.

Patients who use tobacco are given a comprehensive questionnaire by Higgins who asks if the patient is interested in cessation help. If they express interest, they are enrolled in a group therapy class.

Kathy Higgins

Patients who aren't interested in smoking cessation can receive information on the health risks of tobacco usage, which can result in their seeking cessation help in the future.

"We want to be as non-threatening as possible, because many of these people we see repeatedly, and we want them to feel comfortable in asking for help," said Higgins.

One of the popular resources amongst patients is the WCHP Tobacco Quit Kit, according to Higgins, who says they get positive feedback on the items in the kit.

"It makes them think. It lets them know there is information available and opportunities to quit."

Anita Leonard, Monongahela Valley Hospital
The process of identifying exposure to secondhand smoke continues at Monongahela Valley Hospital.

Anita Leonard

Started in the September of 2005, the following steps were taken:

- All of the nurse managers were informed about the project;
- Quarterly chart reviews were to be done for identification and documentation of tobacco users and those exposed to secondhand smoke;
- Secondhand smoke brochures were placed in the Patient Admissions Packet; and;
- Revisions to the Nursing Assessment Form, to include tobacco usage status were printed in January, 2006.

As with any new venture, challenges lie ahead. After a review of patient charts from October through December of last year, it was learned that more patients identified as tobacco users and exposed to secondhand smoke need to receive tobacco cessation teaching sheets. These will be included in a patient tickler file in the future.

Other potential steps include working with the hospital's patient advocate to include a secondhand smoke survey along with the hospital survey, and working with the Emergency Department to identify secondhand smoke exposure in children who are patients in the emergency room.

Fast Facts (continued.)

Local Legislator Visits Update
In the last issue of **Exposure**, we updated you on our work to meet with our local legislators regarding the importance of Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Programs.

Since then, we have been able to add Representative Pete Daley to the list of lawmakers who have met with WCHP.

We continue working with local legislative offices and are optimistic that additional meetings are forthcoming.

More details as they become available.

Smokers to Pay More For Health Insurance
An increasing number of companies are requiring employees who smoke to pay more for health insurance.

Companies such as PepsiCo, Northwest Airlines, and Gannett, along with some public employers such as the states of Alabama and Georgia, require their workers who smoke to pay $20 to $50 monthly in addition to standard insurance premiums.

Those employees who participate in smoking cessation programs or who make attempts to quit tobacco are getting the additional charges waived.

According to Linda Cushman, a senior health care strategist for Hewitt Associates, "It makes good business sense to require employees who smoke to pay more for health insurance because employers spend 25% more for health care for such individuals compared with other employees."

A spokesperson for the Alabama State Employees Insurance Board says, "We know smokers cost more as far as health care goes. We are putting the burden on them to take responsibility for their own health."

Source: Associated Press Houston Chronicle

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A Program of Washington County Health Partners

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AskandAdvise

February 24th Meeting Notes Inside...

Note: You are invited to the next Tobacco Free Task Force Meeting. Details are on the flipside. Please let us know if you are going to attend.

Next Tobacco Free Task Force Meeting Issue:

Review Assessment Data

Friday, March 24, 2006, 9-11 a.m.
Hillsview Chapel Meditation Area, Presbyterian SeniorCare, Washington, PA

Assessment data will be reviewed as we begin to develop a strategic plan for the upcoming fiscal year.

All members of the Tobacco Free Task Force and the WCHP Board of Directors are invited to attend. In addition, this meeting will be of special interest to community health advocates, and citizens interested in tobacco free programs for children and adults. Please feel free to invite others to attend who have an interest in this issue.

To ensure enough materials are available for all attendees, please RSVP by contacting:
Craig Whyel, Tobacco Free Outreach Specialist
Phone: 724-222-6511, ext.12 or 1-866-904-3733 (FREE) ● E-mail: crw@wchpinc.org.

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