Transcript: Communicating the Work of the TCN in New Ways

Andrea Mowery

Hello everyone, and thank you for listening to the first podcast in the 2016-2017 TCN Podcast Series. This is Andrea Mowery, vice president of Clearway, Minnesota, and current TCN Executive Committee chair. I'm joined today by April Roeseler, chief of the California Tobacco Control Program and former TCN Executive Committee member. We are excited to bring you this first podcast, communicating the work of TCN in new ways in which April and I will discuss how TCN makes a variety of communication resources available to state and territorial tobacco control programs. And we will discuss how states and territories can use these resources in their own work. Before turning things over to April, I wanted to discuss the TCN podcast series in greater detail, which itself a new TCN method of communication. Once per month in the fall and winter, the TCN will invite national, state, and local speakers to discuss a variety of topics that support the TCN's strategic direction, including tobacco 21, point of sale policies, e-cigarette policy and evolving science, and the translation of tobacco research into practice.

These podcasts are approximately 15 minutes in length, and will be brief but useful resources to states and territorial tobacco control programs and the TCN's national tobacco control partners. This podcast and all future podcasts will be available on the TCN website, tobaccocontrolnetwork.org under the resources tab. Each podcast recording will be accompanied by a podcast summary and transcript. State tobacco control programs who want to inform a variety of stakeholders may also consider using a podcast format instead of or alongside information webinars because they're faster to produce and disseminate, and they're easily accessible for stakeholders and partners to listen to on their mobile devices. With that, I would like to turn things over to April Roeseler to talk about the TCN policy recommendations. April, thanks for joining me on our first TCN podcast.

April Roeseler

Thanks, Andrea. You know, the 2016 policy recommendations guide that was produced by the Tobacco Control Network, I think it's a really useful tool for state and territorial tobacco control managers, and it's a unique tool because it's grounded in the evidence, but it also reflects the on the ground practical subject matter expertise of the TCN membership who collectively probably have several hundred years of experience in tobacco control work. And you know, all of us in the field of tobacco control, we know that the three most powerful interventions to prevent and reduce tobacco use are to raise tobacco taxes, enact comprehensive second hand smoke protection laws, and maintain comprehensive tobacco control programs.

But what I really like about the policy guide is it acknowledges the critical importance of these strategies, but it also provides a number of other policy and system change options for states to consider, and it also provides well cited summaries of why these policy and system change

strategies are important to changing social norms around tobacco use. From my work with the TCN, I know that every state and every territory is at a different stage of change when it comes to working on tobacco control policy. Sometimes it's important for us to acknowledge that if you can't get a comprehensive clean indoor air state law passed, there are still other really important interventions that a state can work on, such as tobacco free K through 12 schools or smoke free cars. Through such policy work, like this, our leaders become educated, they see there's no terrible consequences of passing these types of laws, and the public health advocates themselves hone their policy skills and capacity.

Another thing that I really like about the policy guide is that in the process of identifying which tobacco control policies should be placed in this guide, the TCN members rated each policy on how likely that policy or system change strategy would be to reduce tobacco related disparities. So this aspect of the policy guide is really enormously helpful to states as they prioritize using their limited resources and capacity. They can't do everything. But by looking at those things that are identified as being most powerful in terms of reducing tobacco related health disparities, we know where we can get the most out of our resources. And all of us in our states are struggling that the tobacco use problem is more and more centered in certain populations, such as African-Americans, American Indians, Asian men, low income populations, LGBT, behavioral health, rural populations, et cetera.

So we really need to focus our strategies on those areas where we are more likely to accelerate declines in tobacco use in these groups. In terms of using the policy guide, it's not meant as a prescription for change. Rather, it's meant to be a resource that will be useful to states in territorial tobacco control managers in things like strategic planning and priority setting. States could use this to actually come up with their own policy platform for their state. Another way I think this document could be really useful is to take it and sit down and have a conversation with voluntary health organizations and come to agreement on things that the state health department and the voluntary health organization can come together around.

I think it's also useful to look at this document and the policies, and then things like what types of data do I need to have in my state or communities to support and drive these types of policy and system change. Another thing from my own experience, I know we can come up with great policy strategies and great policy campaigns, but we have to bring along our communities in doing this work, and we have to provide lots of training and technical assistance, so this document really provides a guide on the types of training and technical assistance we need to be doing with our local communities. And finally, I think that the tool provides some important hints on the types of partnerships that we need to be cultivating within our own state government, our local communities, and the nonprofit sector. So I think that this is a terrific guide, and I'd really encourage people to look at it and to start using it. Thank you, Andrea.

Andrea Mowery

Thank you, April, that was a great overview of the policy recommendations. A reminder that the TCN policy recommendations can be found on the TCN website. Another terrific resource for TCN members are our webinar series. Last spring, the TCN recorded three webinars on topics

important to membership. These webinars are still relevant and available on the TCN website for your use. And I'm going to walk through each of them. In March, the topic was best practices for state tobacco control leaders from the TCN 2016 policy recommendation. This webinar explained how the policy recommendations were created, including how members across the country were involved, and April hit on many of those points, and featured examples of how TCN members have used the recommendations to educate important stakeholders about the importance and effectiveness of policies, as well as how members use the policy recommendations as a resource for strategic planning. So that ties in nicely to what April covered, but another tool nonetheless for your planning.

In April then, the webinar explored – was communicating challenging tobacco control policies with executive leadership. This webinar featured several speakers, including Laura Oliven, tobacco control manager for the Minnesota Department of Health, Beverly May, the regional advocacy director for Western States and the national project manager for raising the tobacco age for 21 for the campaign for tobacco free kids. Jessica Hyde, special populations coordinator for tobacco prevention and control branch of the Texas Department of State Health Services. Donna Solomon Carter, social media and project specialist for the LGBT Health Link at Center Link. And Karen Gerard, section manager of the health promotion and chronic disease prevention section of the Oregon public health division. These speakers shared methods to communicate and convince executive leadership about the importance of implementing best practices and leading edge practices in tobacco control.

The final webinar was in May and examined educational disparities in tobacco use and how individuals with lower educational levels are disproportionately impacted by tobacco use. This webinar featured Yolanda Savage-Narva, director of health equity at ASTHO, and Duana Calhoun, director of Self Made Health Network. These presenters provided perspective and research about how to address these disparities. These webinars are another tool you have to access as a TCN member and can be used to share information with stakeholders or as a resource for planning and education within your own teams. That concludes this podcast.

I want to take a final opportunity to thank April Roeseler, again, for joining me. As a reminder, you'll be able to find all the podcasts in the series and a host of other resources by visiting the TCN website on the resources tab. Questions about the podcast series or any other features of the TCN website can be directed to the TCN inbox at tcn@astho.org. Thank you again for listening and take care.