

Arkansas Systems Training and Outreach Program

Helping Providers Reduce Tobacco Use among Arkansans

Every year, thousands of Arkansans die from tobacco use. Although smoking prevalence is decreasing in Arkansas, the rate at which it is decreasing has recently slowed. Without additional work, prevalence will cease to decline and more Arkansans will suffer serious effects, including death, from tobacco use. With increased awareness and education, healthcare providers can play a pivotal role in ensuring that Arkansans quit tobacco use. Research demonstrates that with academic detailing provided by outreach specialists health care providers are more likely to perform brief interventions and refer their patients that smoke to quit line resources, thus reducing tobacco use.

The Arkansas Department of Health's Systems Training and Outreach Program (STOP) is developing an outreach program to work with health care providers serving populations with disproportionately high smoking/tobacco use prevalence to help them quit tobacco successfully. The program will use regionally based specialists to provide education and support to providers in increasing the capacity and efficiency of their care systems. In particular, the specialists will help providers routinely identify patients who are tobacco users and connect them to the available resources in the state. The program will aim to decrease prevalence statewide, with a special focus on reducing the many disparities between populations in Arkansas, including:

- Less educated populations who have a much higher percentage of smokers than those populations with more formal education. As the level of education decreases, tobacco use prevalence has been shown to increase.
- Lower income populations who have a much higher percentage of smokers than those in higher income groups. As the annual income decreases, tobacco use prevalence increases.

Benefits of the outreach program to Arkansas:

- ✓ *Educated and trained providers in coordinated tobacco treatment*
- ✓ *Decreased tobacco use among disparate populations*
- ✓ *Decline in economic impact of tobacco related illness in Arkansas*
- ✓ *Decline in economic impact from loss in productivity*
- ✓ *Improved health for Arkansans*