

INVESTING IN MCH: PROMOTING MATERNAL SMOKING CESSATION

According to the 2009 Louisiana Health Report Card, Louisiana ranked 2nd in the nation for infant mortality and low birth weight. While prenatal smoking is the most preventable cause of infant mortality and morbidity, the prevalence of smoking among pregnant women in Louisiana was 23.7% during the three months prior to pregnancy and 12.6 % during the last three months of pregnancy. In 2010 the Louisiana Tobacco Control Program (TCP) stepped up its efforts to reduce maternal tobacco use, with the goal of improving birth outcomes. This involved partnering and collaborating with other local and state public health programs and utilizing data, evaluation, and research methods to design and monitor a mass media campaign. TCP's emphasis on inter-agency collaboration and the decision to invest in a cessation media campaign targeting pregnant women were important contributors to the increase in call volume to the state tobacco quitline. TCP collaborated with the Louisiana Public Health Institute's (LPHI) Media & Communications Team on developing and implementing the targeted media campaign. The campaign ventured to increase the number of pregnant callers to the state tobacco quitline by one hundred percent, from 51 callers to 102 callers annually. This was accomplished by the investment of funds granted to TCP through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the CDC's Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) grant. At the start of the formative process, a better understanding of the target population was needed to effectively gain the attention of pregnant women. To collect this primary data, an assessment survey was developed by TCP and LPHI's Media Team. This "Tobacco Use Assessment in Pregnant Women" survey was then distributed to a group of physicians, through a partnership with the Office of Public Health's Maternal and Child Health program. A statistical software program was used to analyze the survey data and a brief report was created to help shape the radio advertisement, based on patient's responses in the survey. The 60 second radio ad was released statewide and ran from February through March 2011. Its effects were immediately apparent. Call volume increased dramatically, from zero to one call per week in the five weeks before the ad ran, to 12 to 17 calls per week during the seven weeks that the ad ran. When the ad was taken off-air for seven days, calls to the quitline immediately fell to pre-campaign numbers. A second run was commissioned and ran from mid-March through the end of the month and call volume increased (again) substantially during this time. The information above will be communicated through a presentation that allows for discussion on the formative process and the details of inter-agency collaboration, as well as presentation of the radio ad and a display of the data demonstrating the increase in call volume.

Session Description

This session will discuss the impact of investing in a media campaign focused on increasing cessation attempts among pregnant women. The session will focus on the role of partnerships and collaboration between state public health programs and other local organizations in designing and implementing the media campaign, as well as on the use of data, evaluation, and research methods to monitor and evaluate program progress. The formative process, survey development and analysis, advertisement development and distribution, will also be covered in this session. Quitline call volume in response to the media campaign will be presented along with the actual radio advertisement.