

# School-Based Tobacco Prevention Grants Program Evaluation

## Executive Summary

### **INTRODUCTION**

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In 2007, the South Dakota Department of Health's Tobacco Control Program (TCP) funded educational institutions to implement evidence-based tobacco prevention programs and improve school tobacco policies. During 2007-2008 cycle, 56 K-12 school sites (public, private and tribally controlled institutions) and 13 post-secondary institution sites (state universities, technical schools, tribally controlled institutions) received funding.

This program summary and accompanying full report are the result of a partnership between the Tobacco Control Program, Black Hills State University and the Minnesota Institute of Public Health. The purpose was to measure the number of school districts and post secondary institutions that have implemented evidence-based tobacco prevention education programs and improved school tobacco policies.

### **METHODOLOGY**

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Review of existing records included baseline data from assessments and funded sites final reports.

- Both baseline and follow-up data were available for 44 of the 56 K-12 sites.
- Baseline and follow-up data regarding policy change were available for five of the 13 post-secondary sites. Documentation of tobacco prevention education includes only final report data from the funded sites, as baseline data was not collected.

Key informant interviews were completed with six K-12 and three post-secondary sites in the area of achieving evidence-based, tobacco curriculum implementation goals. These sites were asked to discuss barriers to implementation and suggestions for improvements in programming.

Key informant interviews were also conducted with five K-12 and five post-secondary sites in the area of achieving tobacco policy improvement goals. These sites were asked to discuss reasons for their success and suggestions for improvements in programming.

### **FINDINGS**

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#### **Tobacco Prevention Education**

It is important to note that while K-12 schools have evidence-based tobacco prevention education curricula options to choose from, post-secondary institutions do not.

Results from the analysis of data for the 2007-2008 grantees show the following progress:

- Thirty-eight of the K-12 sites (86%) have made improvements in the implementation of evidence-based tobacco curriculum.
- Keeping in mind that a lack of baseline data makes it impossible to determine if improvements in prevention education were made at the post-secondary sites, this study was able to determine that:
  - Six institutions (46%) included tobacco education in coursework offered through their institution,
  - Two institutions (15%) primarily offered tobacco presentations to student orientation groups and fraternities,
  - One school (8%) focused on purchasing tobacco education materials for the library and
  - One school (8%) sent student representatives to the National BACCHUS Tobacco Campaign.

Barriers to implementation at the K-12 sites included:

- Gaps in staffing,
- Time to attend appropriate curriculum trainings,

- Time in the school day to incorporate another curriculum topic and
- State restructuring of curriculum training.

One site noted that hosting curriculum training locally would be helpful. Overall, support provided by the TCP was reported to be helpful.

Barriers to implementation at the post-secondary sites included:

- Lack of access to an evidence-based curriculum and
- Acknowledging that campus diversity (e.g. ethnicity, on- and off-campus residents, under- and post-graduate levels) makes it difficult to ensure that all students receive tobacco education appropriate to their situation.

One site recommended that the State work with the Board of Regents, who set policy for state universities, to ensure that tobacco policies around use and curriculum infusion are clear and usable.

### **Tobacco Policies**

Results from the analysis of data for the 2007-2008 grantees show the following progress:

- Four of the K-12 sites (9%) reported improvements, with one of the four schools indicating the update would be completed in June 2008 after the year end report was submitted (this was confirmed during the key informant interviews with this site). A second site indicated changes were made to the student handbook.
- Five of the post-secondary sites (38%) reported changing their campus tobacco policy as a result of the funding provided, but only two provided data that described the changes made.

Representatives from the five K-12 sites noted several items that contributed to their successful tobacco policy changes. These included:

- Readiness for change on their campus,
- Buy-in from key staff,
- Incorporating interventions, instead of punitive consequences, for violators and
- Planning for implementation of the new policy and sharing the changes in advance.

Representatives from the five post-secondary sites also noted several items that contributed to their successful tobacco policy change. These included:

- Involvement of key stakeholders and decision makers,
- Readiness among campus staff and key constituents and
- Funding increased the campuses' ability to make changes at this point in time.

### **FINAL COMMENTS**

Many of the Tobacco Control Program's School-Based Tobacco Prevention grantees made progress toward achieving the project's overall goals during the 2007-2008 school year. Thirty-eight (86%) K-12 sites increased the implementation of evidence-based tobacco prevention programs, while four (9%) made changes to school tobacco policies. Five (38%) post-secondary sites made changes to campus tobacco policy. Assessment of post-secondary changes in implementing evidence-based tobacco prevention programming is harder to gauge, as there is not a cadre of curricula options for this group of institutions to choose from. Based on the results of this evaluation, it is the evaluators' opinion that funding from the Tobacco Control Program increased the likelihood of implementation of evidence-based tobacco prevention programming and changes in school tobacco policies.