

SOMERSET PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING IN ACTION

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND MAINE QUITLINK: A QUITTING TEAM

Redington-Fairview Staff Learn Maine QuitLink Referral Process



Challenge

Over 17% of adults in Somerset County smoke, according to Somerset County Health Profile 2021 data. Experts at the Center On Rural Addiction (CORA) say doctors play a vital role in treating Tobacco Use Disorder as the potentially terminal illness that it is. One of those experts, Dr. Eli Kemplerer, says the "Gold Star" practice is for health care providers to include a referral to a quit line along with nicotine replacement therapy or medication when meeting with patients and discussing their health care plans. People who access quitting services along with the use of nicotine replacement therapy have a 40% success rate. Compare that to quitting cold turkey, which has a success rate of 4%.



Approach

With cooperation of practice managers, providers, and the education department within Redington-Fairview General Hospital, Somerset Public Health trained 10 doctors and 12 nurses and medical assistants. The trainings highlighted the Maine Quit Link's services, how to make a referral digitally or by fax, and the "Gold Star" practice for making a referral. The Maine Quit Link provides free coaching sessions, nicotine patches, gum and lozenges, and many tools to help people quit smoking, chewing and vaping. However, many smokers do not know about the Quit Link, and doctors may not be aware of improvements and updates that have been made to the program.



Results

Currently, there here is no way for a health care team to easily indicate if a referral to the Maine Quit Link has been made by a provider or their team. However, thanks to collaboration with Michele Vigue, a practice manager for five RFGH practices, changes will be made to the current electronic health record so that referrals to the Quit Link can be tracked. With this information, we can evaluate our work and adjust as needed to connect as many people to the Maine Quit Link as possible and improve the lives of our citizens.



At A Glance

Adults in Somerset County smoke at a rate above the state average. Smokers who want to quit and use Maine QuitLink services have a 40% success rate, compared to a 4% success rate without. Health care staff are in a position to screen for tobacco use and make referrals to quitting services. Somerset Public Health worked with Redington-Fairview General Hospital to train 10 doctors and 12 nurses and medical assistants on the Maine QuitLink's services and the referral process. The hospital will update its electronic health record to track referrals and gauge the success of this initiative.

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