

Conference Workshop Abstract

Partnership approach to establishing tobacco-free colleges and universities in Georgia

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Background: Smoking rates in young adults ages 18-24 have been steadily declining since 2011 (2011:25.0%, 2012:22.3%, 2013:16.5% (BRFSS). The Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH) partnered with the Georgia Board of Regents to adopt the 100% Tobacco Free Colleges/Universities policy.

Methods: The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is a state-based surveillance system, administered by the GDPH in collaboration with the CDC. The survey began in 1984 with 15 states participating, including Georgia. The data from this survey were used to inform key shareholders of smoking prevalence to encourage policy adoption as a method of decreasing tobacco use. The GDPH used the CDC's Partnership Toolkit to recruit and retain partnerships with various multi-sector organizations in working towards systems change.

Results: The Georgia Board of Regents—the governing body for the state's system of colleges and universities—adopted the model 100% tobacco free colleges/universities policy resulting in a systems change of 31 campuses now having the model policy in place. The policy not only impacted the students who fall in the 18-24 age group, but the staff and visitors as well.

Conclusions: Partnerships play a key role in creating systems changes. The partnership between the Georgia Board of Regents and the Georgia Department of Public Health contributed to the growing number of colleges and universities who are now 100% Tobacco Free. Using the CDC's Partnership Toolkit allowed for sustainable partnerships leading to positive social change.

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