

Tobacco-Free Living

Community of Practice

BACKGROUND

The home is where most people in Massachusetts are exposed to secondhand smoke (SHS), according to the surgeon general. Exposure leads to numerous negative health consequences because SHS is a known human carcinogen and causes cardiovascular disease and cancer to non-smokers. For example, in 2014, the United States Surgeon General concluded that exposure to SHS increased the risk of stroke in non-smokers by 20 to 30%. SHS is also a known trigger for Asthma attacks.

The Tobacco-Free Living Community of Practice (CoP) aims to minimize people's exposure to SHS through the promotion of voluntary smoke-free housing rules in multiunit dwellings and other initiatives that de-normalize smoking. According to the 2010 Massachusetts BRFSS, most respondents (83.8%) reported that they live in a household where smoking is not allowed, but disparities were evident. Respondents who reported that they have a disability were significantly less likely to report that they lived in a household where smoking is not allowed (75.4%) than respondents who did not report that they had a disability (86%). Respondents with a household income of less than \$25,000 per year (71.2%) were also significantly less likely to report that they lived in a household where smoking is not allowed versus those with income of \$25,000 or more (85.9%). As of 2010, 14.1% of Massachusetts residents reported that they currently smoke. Of current smokers, only 49.9% reported that they had a "no smoking in the home" policy, compared to 89.4% of nonsmokers.

OBJECTIVE BY 2017

Increase the percentage of smokers who report that they have a "no smoking in the home" policy by 5%.

PRIORITY STRATEGIES

- Promote a tenant perspective on the importance of smoke-free housing.
- Coordinate efforts throughout Massachusetts to encourage the voluntary adoption of smoke-free housing rules across the spectrum of our market-rate and subsidized multiunit housing.
- Encourage and improve the tools for comprehensive education and availability of cessation resources during the implementation of voluntary smoke-free housing policies.
- Educate housing industry stakeholders on the importance of comprehensive enforcement of smoke-free rules.
- Improve coordination with the Department of Housing and Community Development in ongoing promotion and technical assistance to municipal housing authorities and other affordable housing providers.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS FOR 2014-2015

Resources and support are needed to promote and maintain compliance of smoke-free rules among tenants.

CO-FACILITATORS

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- A Tenant Summit in 2013 where tenants and tenant-serving groups participated in an open dialogue about the successes and challenges of implementing smoke-free rules in multiunit dwellings.
- Coordination with the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in developing guidelines on implementing smoke-free policies in local housing authorities. The guidelines were released in April 2014 by DHCD to all of its funded local housing authorities.

CoP Members

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