

# Evaluation Briefs

## In Wisconsin Tobacco Control

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### Who we are

University of Wisconsin-Extension (UWEX) provides training and technical assistance in program evaluation to Wisconsin's tobacco-free coalitions. We are part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Program (MEP) of the Wisconsin Tobacco Control Board. ☒

### Staff Updates

Mary Michaud has resigned from her position as State Coordinator for Local Program Evaluation to spend more time with her new daughter, Celia. We wish Mary all the best and thank her for the work she contributed to the project. Questions about the project? Contact Nancy Franz, Administrative Coordinator phone: 608/265-4617 email: nancy.franz@uwex.edu ☒

**Feel free to copy this newsletter for coalition members!**

### *Coalition Spotlight*

#### **Coalition assists companies going smoke-free**

A few large employers in Wood County have found out that help is available when they decide to go smoke-free.

In 2001, the Wood County Tobacco-Free Coalition began working with a paper company with more than 5,000 employees across fifteen sites in four northern Wisconsin counties. In 2000, the company instituted a non-smoking policy for multiple worksites with a cash payment for cessation services outside of the standard benefit plan. The company's union originally pushed for the smoke-free policy, citing employee safety and health concerns.

"After two years, the company suspected that a lot of employees didn't know about the incentive program," says DaNita Carlson, Wood County Tobacco-Free Coalition Coordinator. "We want to help employees quit, and reduce secondhand smoke."

After two years, only 148 employees had taken advantage of the cessation incentive—fewer than expected. Under the program, employees paid for their own cessation services and received reimbursement afterward. Carlson suspected that having to pay up front, submit receipts and fill out the paperwork were too many steps for employees. In fact, research shows that when employers remove barriers to cessation, employees are more likely to attempt to quit. "People need to know about the benefits and how to access them," says Lezli Redmond, Director of Outreach with the Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention. "Policies are not enough."

To assess how the policy affected employees, Carlson worked with UW—

Extension Northern Regional Evaluation Specialist, Chris Dobbe, to develop and implement an employee survey. The survey asked the following questions:

Did smokers reduce the amount they smoked, quit smoking, or institute a no-smoking policy at home?

If smokers quit, did they feel the cessation benefit helped them quit? Would smokers be more likely to try quitting if coverage for cessation benefits was a part of their health insurance plan? What types of therapies would they most likely use?

Carlson plans to work with a nurse in the company's employee wellness program to share survey results with company management. They will suggest ways to enforce the policy and encourage employees to use the cessation benefit.

One challenge Carlson faces is how to spread the work among coalition members. Carlson now does the vast majority of work with employers but hopes that coalition members will contribute more in the future. Working with coalition coordinators from other counties has helped.


"Instead of recreating the wheel each time, we work off of what the other coalitions are doing," says Carlson. As part of the Tobacco-Free Coalition of Central Wisconsin, which includes Wood, Marathon, and Portage counties, she meets monthly with other coalition coordinators to share information and coordinate their efforts in the region.

Coalitions working toward the Wisconsin

## Workshops get favorable reviews

UWEX staff toured the state last fall training staff and members of local tobacco-free coalitions in the nuts and bolts of analyzing and communicating evaluation data. A total of 66 people attended the five regional workshops from 47 tobacco-free coalitions, or 61% of all coalitions.

All participants said the workshops increased their confidence in their ability to describe and judge the quality of quantitative data and communicate evaluation results. Hands-on exercises challenged participants to analyze data and to critique written data reports. They found these exercises extremely useful to their own work. In the words of one participant, "I'm not a numbers person, and the material really helped my confidence to deal with data and statistics."

UWEX staff will use feedback from participants to tailor future training materials, building on the information presented during the workshops. One area for improvement includes a more structured networking session for coalition facilitators and members. Handouts and evaluation results from the workshops are available on the Local Evaluation web site: [www.uwex.edu/ces/tobaccoeval/workshop02.html](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/tobaccoeval/workshop02.html). 


### Top ten lessons from UWEX fall workshops on analyzing and reporting evaluation data

10. Start by looking at existing data. Do we really need to collect new data?
9. Develop a data analysis plan first. Throughout the process, ask yourself "why are we doing this?"
8. There is no single way to report evaluation results. But considering each distinct audience can help clarify your message.
7. Descriptive, or summary statistics are often sufficient to make your case at the community level. You can sometimes get to descriptive statistics without a computer.
6. Sampling can save time and money. But it takes a bit of technical knowledge to do it right.
5. Funds often follow credible evidence.
4. Know the limitations of your study, and report them when necessary.
3. Ask yourself whether your methods really allow you to generalize to the population.
2. You don't have to report all your results. Select one or two main points and report those.
1. If it's a big job and you have the money, farm it out.

*"Coalition Assists Companies Going Smoke-Free," Continued.*

Tobacco Control Board goal of reducing smoking in worksites can consider the following steps:


- **Research tells us that planning workplace smoking cessation is most effective when combined with other occupational safety and health issues.** Workers do not want to be "singled-out" as having a problem.
- **Develop a plan for a local ordinance banning smoking in worksites.** Evidence from other states suggests that worksite smoking ordinances and the local process to pass them can change social norms about smoking and are associated with increased cessation in the community.
- **Help gather information.** Help the company understand whether existing non-smoking policy and cessation benefits have been implemented as planned.
- **Assist the worksite to develop a plan.** Use information to strategize with the company about how to increase employee use of cessation benefits and strengthen employee and management buy-in for policy.
- **Help the employer communicate with employees.** Help the company package information for employees.
- **Promote the employer's role in community relations.** Engage large employers as advocates for smoke-free worksites and smoke-free ordinances in the community by demonstrating increases in productivity and savings in health care costs.
- **Collaborate with other coalitions.** Multi-site workplaces may offer an opportunity to collaborate with coalitions in other counties.

For materials that assist worksites in considering non-smoking policies, check out the new *Employers' Smoking Cessation Guide: Practical Approaches to a Costly Workplace Problem*, a publication produced by PACT (Professional Assisted Cessation Therapy), a consortium of health care providers and large employers, available online at [www.endsmoking.org](http://www.endsmoking.org). 

## UW-Extension: A potential coalition partner

Building capacity for community-level change takes good local partners, and UW—Extension is one potential partner in the local fight against tobacco. For decades, University of Wisconsin—Cooperative Extension agents have worked at the community level to bring organizations together for community development. Already, Extension agents have become a critical part of tobacco-free coalitions around Wisconsin. In Taylor County, Extension has provided support and office space for an Americorp Volunteer to work with the tobacco-free coalition's youth advocacy efforts.

In Walworth County, the Extension office will become the fiscal agent in 2003 for the county's tobacco control coalition. "We elected to reach out to our Extension office because they have skills and energy needed to reinvigorate and sustain our local Tobacco Coalition," says John Bigler, Assistant Director, Walworth County Health and Human Services. "It was always the health department's vision to have the "community" lead the tobacco control efforts. This takes us closer to that goal." In various other counties, Extension agents serve as members of the local tobacco-free coalition.

Extension agents have skills in a number of areas that may be a help to your coalition: planning, evaluation, coalition development, working with elected officials, leadership development, working with youth, agency coordination, and accessing the resources of the University. Contact your local Extension officer Nancy Franz here at our State Local Program Evaluation Office (phone: 608/265-4617, email: [nancy.franz@uwex.edu](mailto:nancy.franz@uwex.edu)) 

University of Wisconsin—Cooperative Extension has agents in every county of the state. The mission of UWEX includes helping people in communities use scientific research to solve local problems.

Cooperative Extension (called cooperative because it receives public funding from county, state and national levels) provides outreach and education in four principal areas:

- Agriculture
- Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development
- Family Living (including Nutrition Education)
- 4-H and Youth Development

Learn more about UW-Extension at [www.uwex.edu](http://www.uwex.edu)

## New evaluation tips online

Several new items now appear on our web site. They include:


- **Conversations with local elected officials for evaluation and policy change.** Read tips about how to evaluate elected officials' attitudes toward smoking restrictions in public places.

- **"Fast feedback"**

**in evaluation.** Use [www.uwex.edu/ces/tobaccoeval](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/tobaccoeval) this "quick and

easy" method to gather information about progress during a meeting, session or group process.

- **Using observation in evaluation.** Learn how to use participant observers and non-participant observers to evaluate pieces of a local program.

- **Using a "priorities questionnaire" to evaluate what is important to local stakeholders.** Identify what is important among those whose opinion is critical to the success of a program or initiative. 

## News Flash: New UWEX Team Member!

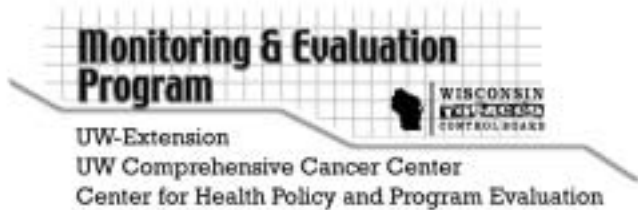
**Lynn Hrabik** has joined UWEX as the Regional Evaluation Specialist for the Northeast Region. Lynn joins us as a former coalition coordinator for the Tobacco Free Juneau County Coalition, has managed 6 tobacco control grants, and is finishing her MPH in Community Health at UW-LaCrosse. Lynn brings a lot of great talent to the local evaluation team. Welcome, Lynn!

## UW Extension staff share approaches at national tobacco conference

Staff from UW-Extension facilitated two sessions at the National Conference on Tobacco Or Health in San Francisco on November 20, 2002. Bonita Westover, Southern Regional Evaluation Specialist, and Ellen Taylor-Powell, Project Director, facilitated a 90-minute discussion of Wisconsin's approach to providing training and technical assistance in program development and evaluation. They also facilitated a 30-minute workshop entitled "Evaluation on a Shoestring" to demonstrate evaluation methods that local coalitions can use when faced with limited resources.

"People were very interested to hear about our experience," said Westover. "Wisconsin was well represented at the conference, and it's clear we are a leader in evaluation technical assistance."

Handouts from both presentations are available at [www.uwex.edu/ces/tobaccoeval/SanFran02.htm](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/tobaccoeval/SanFran02.htm) 



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