New York Tobacco Control Program Community Success: Increased Public Support for Local Policy Change at the Point of Sale, 2010-2012

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Background: The Point-of-Sale Initiative

Smoking prevalence rates among American adults decreased by approximately 50% between 1964 and 2012, when nearly one half of Americans smoked. Currently, an estimated 18% of all Americans aged 18 years or older are smokers.1

New York State currently has the highest cigarette tax rate in the nation, a comprehensive indoor smoking ban, and a smoking prevalence rate that is among the lowest in the nation. But, tobacco use prevalence rates have remained relatively unchanged2 in recent years.

To ensure continued decreases in tobacco use among New Yorkers, the New York Tobacco Control Program (NY TCP) implemented a Point-of-Sale (POS) Initiative in 2009. The goal of the POS Initiative is to decrease youth exposure to retail tobacco product marketing and promotion, a primary cause of youth initiation.

The POS Initiative is implemented by the Program’s Community Contractors—33 Community Partnerships and 16 Reality Check Youth Partners. Contractors engage in activities to build support for POS policy solutions in New York’s counties, cities, towns, and villages.

The Center for Public Health and Tobacco Policy at New England Law-Boston developed 4 policy solutions for the POS Initiative:

- Prohibit the display of tobacco products in pharmacies
- Prohibit the display of tobacco products
- Prohibit the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies
- Prohibit the sale of tobacco products

The NY TCP’s Approach to Advancing Community Policies

Between 2010 and 2013, Community Contractors implemented the Community Transformation Framework in support of the POS Initiative by conducting:

- 650 Community Education events ranging from individual meetings with influential community members to public presentations at community events
- 414 Community Mobilization activities (this included recruiting influential community members and organizations at public events and individual meetings)
- 650 Earned Media events, resulting in 747 recorded instances of Earned Media

Government Policy Maker Education Activities

- Policy makers who Confirmed Support for POS policies were contacted by the Center for Public Health and Tobacco Policy at New England Law-Boston.

Increased Public Support for POS Initiative Policy Change?

Methods

Date

New York Adult Tobacco Survey. Representative sample of New York adults 18 years or older interviewed by phone between 2010 and 2012, includes list-assisted random digit dial and directory-listed landline numbers and cell phone only households. One adult randomly selected to complete the survey in each household.

Ancestry

- Responses dichotomized to 0 (against) and 1 (in favor)

Logistic regression to test for linear trends across years for each model

- 2011 to 2012 differences also tested

Results

Sample size and unweighted and weighted percentage of sample by smoking status and gender, 2010-2012

![Graph showing changes in support for POS policies over time](image)

Paid Media Campaign—newspaper, magazine, billboards, bus sides, radio

Discussion and Implications

Support for the POS Initiative policies did not increase between 2010 and 2011. Although they were discouraged, the Program and its Community Contractors increased their community mobilization and outreach efforts. In 2012, support for all 4 POS policies had increased significantly. This provided evidence that Community Contractor activities were having an effect and reinforced the Program’s commitment to reducing youth exposure to store tobacco marketing.

Building support for policies to reduce the level of in-store tobacco marketing takes time and persistence, but the New York Tobacco Control Program experience demonstrates that the public is receptive to this message.

Increased public support for POS policies in New York has also resulted in progress toward policy change.

In April 2012, the first tobacco product display ban in the United States was enacted in the Village of Harrison, NY. The NY Association of Convenience Stores and 7 tobacco companies filed a suit in June, claiming the ordinance violated their First Amendment rights, and the Village rescinded the law on July 16th, 2012.

In May 2013, the New York City Council held public hearings focused on Mayor Bloomberg’s proposal to ban the display of tobacco products in the City. To date, no action has been taken on the proposal.

References


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