

Care, Comfort and Hope

Wisconsin Hospitals Community Benefits

Tobacco Use and Exposure

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease and death in Wisconsin. More people die of tobacco-related disease than to alcohol, cocaine, heroin, homicide, suicide, motor vehicle accidents and HIV/AIDS combined. Wisconsin hospitals offer a variety of education and smoking cessation classes to help people kick the habit. In addition, all Wisconsin hospitals are tobacco free, campus wide, to signal their support of creating an environment that promotes wellness.

Affinity NurseDirect- Call It Quits

For many people, stopping the usage of tobacco on your own can be challenging. Affinity Nurse Direct “Call It Quits Tobacco Cessation Program” offers support through telephone-based counseling or classroom counseling. The program is designed to help individuals assess their tobacco habit, identify triggers and develop a personalized plan. Phone counseling is free and open to anyone in the Fox Cities and Oshkosh.

When patients call, a counselor provides support, develops a personalized plan to quit and sends an educational packet to assist in the process.

Kristy Hartman-Begun, RN BSN, director of the Call It Quits program, says, “These telephone-counseling sessions have successfully helped many people quit by providing people with privacy, confidentiality and convenience. “

The program has surpassed national averages for tobacco quitting rates, reducing tobacco usage rates among adults by five percent and among teens by 16 percent. There are also in-person classes at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Appleton and Mercy Medical Center in Oshkosh.

Affinity Health System

Amanda & Carl Manning Go Smoke-free

Sure, we did it for ourselves,” say Carl and Amanda Manning. “Most of all, though, we did it for our two daughters.”

The Mannings knew they’d be healthier, live longer, and save money if they quit smoking. They’d been thinking about this step for a while; Amanda had already tried quitting once or twice. Now, however, they have two more reasons to quit. Their daughter Micaelyn is three, and her sister Madison just turned one.

“Cigarette smoke is a carcinogen,” says Carl, “and it sticks to your clothes. Even if we didn’t smoke around the kids, we’d still be exposing them to the effects. We just didn’t want to do that.”

“Plus,” says Amanda, “Kids learn from what they see. They watch and imitate. We didn’t want them to see us smoking and think that it’s OK. Children of smokers have a better chance of growing up to be smokers themselves; we didn’t want that to happen to our girls.”

Giving up tobacco has also helped the Manning’s financially. At eight dollars a pack, the monthly total for two smokers can add up fast. “And with the money we save,” says Carl, “now we can take the girls out to the Dairy Queen a little more often.”

Both Carl and Amanda have been smoke-free since January 19; they quit with the help of a “Kick’n Butts” smoking cessation program at Spooner Health System. Participants meet once a week for five weeks in a row. Amanda learned about the program at work; she works in the business office at Spooner Health System. Although her workplace has been smoke-free for three years, quitting still wasn’t easy.

Surprisingly, Carl and Amanda weren’t asked to turn in their cigarettes on the first night. They still needed to get ready. During their first two sessions, participants learn what to expect and how to be successful. “Quit Night” is scheduled for the third week’s session. Later, two more sessions give participants a chance to learn more coping strategies, talk about



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the challenges they're facing, and swap ideas for working through the inevitable cravings—cravings that can be especially intense during those first few weeks after quitting.

"Gum and patches help," says Amanda. "But that only gets you so far. It was the support and the coping skills we got from the "Kick'n Butts" class that really made the difference." As an example, Amanda describes the "trigger" situations that can be tough for those who have quit recently. "It might be when you're driving, after you eat, or when you drink. It's different for everyone. And when you encounter that 'trigger,' you'd better be ready."

"Some people suck on straws or toothpicks," says Carl. "Myself, I chewed a lot of gum for a while." Amanda had a different strategy.

"Sometimes I'd just slow down and take a couple of deep breaths," she told us. "That almost gave me the same sensation as I used to get from smoking."

Six months after quitting, both of the Mannings are breathing more deeply all day long. Carl works construction; he feels better and has more energy on the jobsite. They've both noticed they feel healthier. Best of all, they can now play with their kids without running out of breath.

Carl and Amanda have quit for good. They both credit the SHS "Kick'n Butts" smoking cessation program for their success.

"If you're ready to quit," says Carl, "give it a shot. It's free, and it's just an hour a night, once a week. What have you got to lose?"

Spooner Health System, Spooner

Fourth-graders are taught the hazards of tobacco use

Forty-one high school students from Black River Falls, Melrose-Mindoro, and Alma Center, Humbird and Merrilan School Districts participated in the Teens Against Tobacco Use (T.A.T.U.) Program. This program is sponsored by Partners of Black River Memorial Hospital along with involvement from the hospital, Jackson County Public Health Department, Jackson County Schools, WIC, and Together for Jackson County Kids.

The program trains high school students to teach elementary students about the harmful effects of tobacco use. Training sessions for the high school students were conducted at their schools in September. The teens learned about the many dangerous chemicals in cigarette smoke, the negative health effects of tobacco use, and the powerful influence of tobacco advertising. Teens learned how to do demonstrations using pig lungs. Two pig lungs, one healthy and another treated to represent the black lung of a pack-a-day smoker, show the effects of smoking on the human lung. The training also stressed the powerful influence that teenage youth have as role models with elementary students. The teens worked together to develop a short summary of their plan.

The T.A.T.U. teens made presentations to fourth-grade students in September and October. The teens used the pig lungs and many other visual aids in their presentations. They gave classroom teachers a letter about the program to send home to parents, a cost of smoking math lesson and information about the Smoke Free/Anti-Tobacco Poster Contest for the fourth-grade students. One winning poster was selected from Melrose-Mindoro, one from Alma Center, Humbird and Merrilan and two from Black River Falls. The winning posters are placed on billboards in the Black River Falls area during the month of January.

Black River Memorial Hospital, Black River Falls

Tobacco Prevention in Waukesha County

Community Memorial Hospital serves as the lead agency for the Waukesha County Tobacco Prevention and Control Program and supports community-wide efforts to reduce the harmful effects of tobacco-related illnesses. Working with the Waukesha County Tobacco Free Coalition, the Tobacco Control Specialist at Community Memorial in 2009 has held numerous events with a national speaker to discuss the dangers of secondhand smoke in the workplace and to share the positive impact of statewide smoke-free air policies that protect everyone's right to breathe clean air. In addition, the Tobacco Control Specialist conducted and compiled a report on air quality testing in the Village of Menomonee Falls workplaces and partnered with Carroll University and Waukesha County Technical College to develop Tobacco Free Campus policies. She also collaborated with St. Anthony's 8th grade class to educate students about the dangers of tobacco use.

Community Memorial Hospital, Menomonee Falls

Submit community benefit stories to Mary Kay Grasmick, editor, at mgrasmick@wha.org.



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