



Tobacco-Free Grounds

the people

Rumford Hospital (RH) employs approximately 220 people and serves the Western Maine towns of Rumford, Mexico, Dixfield, Peru, Andover, Hanover, Byron, Roxbury, Canton, Carthage, and Newry. The Hospital's Wellness Team, whose primary goal is to keep each other well and safe, was formed just over a year ago after the hospital received a mini-grant to address employee wellness. The team is an assortment of clinical staff, nonclinical staff, and community members such as the Director of the local Healthy Maine Partnership. The team's motto is "Improve employee wellness."

the need

After conducting an employee wellness survey in the winter of 2003, the Wellness Team received an overwhelmingly clear response from employees indicating one top priority regarding employee health—decrease tobacco use. The team knew that, like individuals, organizations must be prepared to weather the temporary discomfort that accompanies a major change. Becoming tobacco-free would be such a change. With more than 75% of the surveys returned, the results indicated favorable readiness for change. Armed with that knowledge, the team was ready to take significant steps toward keeping each other well and safe.

the idea

During the past year, the Wellness Team has worked to create an environment that supports leading a tobacco-free lifestyle. The team knew that success would require tackling the tobacco problem from many angles, listed below:

- Customer comfort and satisfaction
- Employee health
- Public relations
- Safety
- Policy change
- Culture change
- Clinical approaches to tobacco issues, ranging from nicotine withdrawal to mental health ramifications

The team has worked diligently to address all of these areas. Some of the team's efforts have resulted in practical improvements such as new standing orders for the treatment of nicotine withdrawal created jointly with the Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee, as well as eliminating environmental tobacco smoke adjacent to the main outpatient entrance.

2.4 Tobacco Use Policy Success Stories

Tobacco-Free Grounds (continued)

the idea at work

Working with entities from outside the organization, including the local Healthy Maine Partnership and the State's Maine Cardiovascular Health Program, gave the team a broader view of the issues. Rumford's small size and limited resources necessitate strategic partnering with local and State organizations. In seeking collaborators, the Wellness Team embraced the sentiment expressed by Dr. Stephen Fawcett, a researcher at the University of Kansas, when he stated: "The well-being of any of us is embedded in the well-being of all of us."

The smallest version of Rumford Hospital's community, the RH workforce, has been educated about employee benefits for nicotine replacement and other quit aids. They have been encouraged to use resources such as the Maine Tobacco HelpLine, and have also been approached one-on-one by members of the Wellness Team, as well as in groups, and asked to voice their concerns about the change to a tobacco-free campus. A six-session, in-service education series was completed before the November 20 policy change date to ease the transition. Special events were planned to add humor and tolerance to the week of the change.

For the larger version of the RH community, the workforce and the customers it serves, it took a great deal of publicity to alert people of the upcoming change. Poster displays, information cards, brochures, newspaper articles, public appearances, and radio interviews are some of the efforts made. A new brochure was presented to patients upon admission to the hospital, explaining the new policy and offering helpful hints to make the hospital stay as comfortable as possible. Two nurses have been identified as resource people and received all-day training early in November.

The more inclusive version of the RH community, the workforce plus residents of the Rumford Hospital service area, have been offered ongoing tobacco cessation classes at the hospital, including a class during the week of the Great American Smokeout. All community members have been invited to participate in these classes.



the costs

The Hospital was allotted \$3,000 to put toward improving employee health, of which \$2,000 was designated for creating a tobacco-free campus and \$1,000 was designated for creating a culture more supportive of employee wellness. Both projects involved the Hospital's additional worksites, Swift River Healthcare and the Elsomore Dixfield Clinic, expanding the number of employees affected to around 350. The funds were essential in making the change to a tobacco-free campus, including purchasing signage for all three properties, designating them tobacco-free; promotion of the policy change; and healthy snacks and hard candy to help staff through the week of change.

The funds have also been used to begin the process of creating a culture that is more supportive of employee health. Some of the money was used to bring a motivational speaker to the workforce and community, so that 2,000 people (nearly 20% of the population of the combined 10 communities) will receive the same inspiring message about caring for ourselves and each other. Four area Wellness Teams are collaborating on this project. With the remaining money, the RH Wellness Team will have to make some decisions about focusing on nutrition and physical activity. One option that is appealing to the team involves printing copies of walking maps of the ten communities and distributing them to all employees, followed by becoming involved in the Healthy Communities spring walk program. Another option being discussed involves creation of an employee cookbook featuring heart-healthy recipes and nutritional advice.

the results

The Wellness Team wanted to support people in making healthy choices without creating hard feelings among the employees not yet ready to quit smoking. Education about tobacco dependence and readiness for change was well-received. One participant stated that the education highlighted how we can all be right in our feelings of acceptance of the changes being made. Another stated that the Wellness Team "is not being viewed as the tobacco cops but as people who can help when an employee is ready to give up tobacco."



2.4 Tobacco Use Policy Success Stories

Tobacco-Free Grounds (continued)

The fun physical activities were met with enthusiasm. Eight sessions of a physical activity known as Commuter Aerobics showed participants a variety of ways to fit more physical activity into a busy schedule. Many participants expressed that the physical activities were fun and generated many laughs, another way of boosting wellness.

Positive feedback abounded from the participants of the adopt-a-smoker portion of the Great American Smokeout. One smoker who was adopted expressed, “I never knew so many people cared about me. At least three people wanted to adopt me.” Another worried, “I thought no one cared about me because I wasn’t adopted, but then I was adopted and that made me feel good!” Another participant said that she had wanted to quit for the sake of her grandchild. To gear up for the Smokeout she placed photos of the child throughout her office and obtained nicotine patches ahead of time. At 7:00 PM when she was still tobacco-free, she said, “I wasn’t sure I could do it, but I did.”

The RH Wellness Team believes that a healthy workplace supports and encourages workers to lead healthy lifestyles. Further, the team believes the new tobacco use policy represents a “giant leap” toward improving the health of the organization and its employees.

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Below is the Rumford Hospital Tobacco Use Policy.

Rumford Hospital Smoke-Free Campus Policy

Purpose: In accordance with Rumford Hospital's mission statement: Rumford Hospital is committed to provide competent medical service, to be responsive to the individual needs of our customers through the combination of caring, professional competence, and updated technology.

Policy: The use of all tobacco products (cigarettes, cigars, pipes, and smokeless tobacco) is prohibited on hospital-owned property and grounds and in all leased or rented office space where Rumford Hospital employees work. Individuals are required to cease use of any tobacco product upon arrival on the Rumford Hospital campus. For safety and health reasons it is necessary to appropriately discard all tobacco products appropriately.

There will be no smoking in any Rumford Hospital-owned or -leased vehicle.

This policy applies to patients, employees, volunteers, visitors, vendors, contracted workers, tenants of RH, medical staff, and students.

Responsibility:

- It is the responsibility of Rumford Hospital personnel and medical staff to educate patients about the tobacco-free policy before and during their admissions and/or at other times patients are on the Rumford Hospital campus.
- It is the responsibility of managers to educate their employees on this policy. Violation of this policy by staff will be treated like any other policy infraction resulting in progressive discipline.
- All individuals associated with Rumford Hospital will be held accountable and have a responsibility to promote this policy and educate visitors, patients, and fellow employees.
- The Human Resource Department will communicate to applicants and employees Rumford Hospital's Smoke-Free Campus Policy.
- It is the responsibility of Rumford Hospital's Human Resource Department to educate all new employees at Orientation to Rumford Hospital's Smoke-Free Campus Policy.
- Appropriate signage shall be installed and maintained on the Rumford Hospital property and all other locations associated with Rumford Hospital.