



Smoke-free Public Housing: Helping Smokers Quit

E-newsletter #1

June 14, 2018

Thank you for reading the inaugural e-newsletter for the Tobacco Cessation in Public Housing Initiative, known publicly as Smoke-free Public Housing: Helping Smokers Quit (SFPH:HSQ). What is this initiative, and why are you receiving information about it? Read on!

About the Initiative

A U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rule will require all public housing agencies (PHAs) to implement a smoke-free policy by July 30, 2018. This rule prohibits the use of tobacco products in all residential units, indoor common areas, administrative offices, and all outdoor areas within 25 feet of public housing and administrative buildings. (E-cigarette use is subject to each PHA's discretion.) Enforcement of this rule is also left to each PHA's discretion, but residents could ultimately be evicted if they don't comply with this rule. Since approximately 34% of [adults living in public housing smoke cigarettes](#), the rule provides an important public health opportunity to increase access to tobacco cessation services.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Control Intervention group under Drs. Durado Brooks and Laura Makaroff, Smoking Cessation Leadership Center at UCSF, and the North American Quitline Consortium are collaborating with PHAs, state quitlines, and community health centers (CHCs) to help residents in public housing quit smoking for good. This collaboration, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, will start as a pilot program in 6 communities to help all interested residents get support to quit smoking.

Using the [CHANGE](#) structure, we will work with 6 CHCs and 6 nearby PHAs to increase awareness of and capacity and demand for tobacco cessation services. We'll also create a Tobacco Cessation [ECHO](#) to help CHCs learn best practices for cessation support and to help PHAs support their residents as they try to quit. By strengthening partnerships among residents, clinicians, public housing authorities, and other related organizations, this pilot program will help residents – who are already at higher risk for several health challenges – quit smoking and reduce their risk for a number of related illnesses, including cancer.

This grant will strengthen partnerships among residents, clinicians, PHAs, and other related organizations, including behavioral health and legal aid groups, to increase health equity. This work is a necessary and important addition to supporting our Cancer Control Blueprint priorities of tobacco cessation and healthy communities/health equity.

You can find [more information about the smoke-free policy from HUD](#).

Facts about Public Housing*

Why is this such a big deal? Why is more help needed for this population?

- There are 1,871,260 residents of public housing as of March 2018
- More than 49% of residents remain in public housing more than 5 years
- Approximately 600,380 children under 18 live in public housing, accounting for 36% of residents
- Nearly 283,000 residents of public housing are age 62 and above, representing 17% of residents
- About 21% of public housing households include a member who is disabled
- The average annual household income is \$14,578, well below the poverty line; the primary source of income for 34% of households is wages from working
- Public housing residents:
 - o Are more likely to be in fair or poor health (35.8% of adults, compared to 13.8% of other adults)
 - o Have high rates of tobacco-related illnesses (i.e. COPD – 13.1% of adults compared to 6.1% of other adults)
 - o Are more likely to be have health problems made worse by secondhand smoke, like asthma, heart disease, and diabetes
 - o Are more likely to spend more time indoors due to safety concerns, increasing exposure to secondhand smoke, reducing activity levels, and exacerbating obesity-related issues
- Many people in public housing also face mental health issues; those with mental health issues are more likely to smoke

* Sources: US Department of Housing and Urban Development and the National Center for Health in Public Housing

Timeline of Key Dates (tentative)

We'll be working in 6 communities, one each from California, Florida, Kentucky, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas. These states were chosen with our grant partners and the funder based on percentage of smokers in the population, percentage of the population who are public housing residents, and for a range of availability of government-related resources. We will be collaborating with Regional staff to identify the specific communities in which we'll be funding CHCs and low-resource PHAs. Everything comes together from there:

- Early July – identify CHC and PHA sites within selected states
- Late July/early August – invite CHANGE application from selected CHCs and PHAs
- Fall 2018 – finalize CHANGE awards with selected CHCs and PHAs
- Fall 2018 – listening sessions/key informant interviews with CHCs, PHAs, and state quitlines to inform ECHO and other focus topics
- January 2019 –ECHO launches with biweekly ECHO sessions for selected CHCs and PHAs
- January 2019-December 2020 - as data comes in, dissemination of lessons learned/best practices
- April 2020 – official end to pilot funding

Partners



Who are these partners making this pilot program happen? We simply couldn't do it without the expertise of other organizations.

[The Smoking Cessation Leadership Center at the University of California-San Francisco](#) (SCLC at UCSF) works to decrease smoking rates and increase the number of health professionals who help smokers quit. During the last 15 years, SCLC has lead smoking cessation education and advocacy efforts across the country.

They aim to drive health systems transformation and deliver sustainable solutions through providing technical assistance, organizing leadership summits, social marketing, bringing together catalytic leaders, and producing national webinars for education. They have established partnerships with dental hygienists, nurses, pharmacists, emergency physicians, hospitals, family physicians, mental health and substance abuse providers, advocates, and leadership for far-reaching effect from health care providers in a variety of specialties.

SCLC works closely with public housing authorities (PHAs) and behavioral health organizations. Their experience will prove integral to ensuring that providers are trained in how tobacco cessation could uniquely affect vulnerable populations.

[The North American Quitline Consortium](#) is an international, non-profit membership organization that seeks to promote evidence-based quitline services across diverse communities in North America.

Quitlines are telephone-based tobacco cessation services that help tobacco users quit. Services offered by quitlines include coaching and counseling, referrals, mailed materials, training to healthcare providers, Web-based services and, in some instances, free medications such as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). Research has shown that quitlines are highly effective in helping tobacco users quit. NAQC's membership is made up of more 400 organizations and individuals from across North America. Members consist of organizations and individuals that provide quitline services, fund quitlines, conduct research around quitline-related topics, advance national cessation policies, and work in other areas of tobacco control. Their members enjoy professional support, educational programs, and opportunities for participation in activities to help improve quitlines.

Quitline members serving the 6 states of the pilot will be given the opportunity to participate in this project to enhance their relationships with CHCs and serve more PHA residents. And because quitlines are so effective, we expect them to be an essential part of helping PHA residents quit and stay quit.

Immediate Educational Opportunity

SCLC Webinar

[SCLC](#) is holding the first webinar of the initiative. *Clearing the Air: Comprehensive Approaches to Smoke-Free Public Housing*, will be held **Monday, June 18, 1 – 2:30 pm EDT**. **Please join the webinar to find out more, and please share this with your accounts.** (Free CME/CEs of up to 1.5 credits will be available for participants who join the LIVE session. They will receive instructions on how to claim credit via the post-webinar email.)

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Presenters include:

- **Leroy L. Ferguson**, Housing Program Specialist, Department of Housing and Urban Development
- **Robert Burns**, Director, National Center for Health in Public Housing
- **Ashley LeMaistre, MPH**, Program Coordinator, Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention, Austin Public Health
- **Robin Scala**, Health Communication Specialist, Office on Smoking and Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Webinar Objectives:

1. Explain HUD's Public Housing Smoke-Free requirement, and how the health community can support public housing residents impacted by this rule.
2. Describe the health care and smoking cessation related resources available from Community Health Centers, particularly health centers in or immediately accessible to public housing, especially Public Housing Primary Care grantees.
3. Identify communication and engagement strategies for reaching residents of public housing authorities adopting smoke-free policies.
4. Describe how the CDC *Tips from Former Smokers*® (*Tips*®) campaign has raised awareness about the dangers of smoking and motivated smokers to quit.
5. Identify free and low-cost *Tips*® campaign resources to encourage smoking cessation among public housing residents.

This webinar will be recorded and may be viewed online on the [Smoking Cessation Leadership Center's website](#) after the presentation.

To Learn More

For more information about Smoke-free Public Housing: Helping Smokers Quit, contact [Becky Slemons](#), director, Tobacco Cessation in Public Housing Initiative.