Michigan Helps People Living with HIV Quit Tobacco Use

by: Lynne Stauff, MPA

SUMMARY
Thanks to a new pilot project People Living with HIV (PLWH) in treatment are asked regularly if they use tobacco products. Help is now available to quit tobacco at AIDS Service Organizations (ASO). Why is this important? Because PLWH in treatment are dying 12 years sooner from smoking cigarettes than from complications from AIDS. Fifty percent of PLWH in Michigan smoke cigarettes whereas 21% of the general adult population smoke. Fourteen ASO's are funded statewide to provide clients with tobacco dependence treatment.

CHALLENGE
PLWH are living much longer due to life saving HIV medications. In fact, with proper treatment HIV has become a chronic disease. Unfortunately PLWH who smoke and treated for HIV are dying 12 years sooner from smoking related diseases rather than AIDS. They are dying from heart disease, cancer and stroke. PLWH are difficult to reach as many struggle with high rates of mental illness, substance abuse, and poverty. A high number of those with HIV disease are also part of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer (LGBTQ) community. This community has endured a lifetime of stigma, discrimination, isolation, health and social injustice. High tobacco use among this community can be linked to focused tobacco advertising and marketing campaigns designed to glamorize smoking and appeal to youth. Most PLWH began smoking as teens making it even more difficult to quit as an adult.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY
Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death and disease in Michigan. Quitting tobacco is the most difficult addiction to overcome. You can help by becoming more educated about tobacco prevention and treatment. Almost 90% of current adult smokers start smoking as teens. What works to help? Passing Smoke-Free Indoor Air laws; making public spaces smoke-free; raising tobacco prices; fully funding State tobacco programs and; using Michigan's Tobacco QuitLine @1-800-784-8669.

"Using the skills learned I’ve seen clients move from feeling hopeless about quitting to feeling empowered. One client who quit said, “I honestly didn’t think I could quit but after meeting with you I felt so excited about quitting and have been smoke-free for 4 months.”

- Love Chambers, HIV Nurse Patient Educator, RN, TTS

Success Stories

http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/
SOLUTION

Engage and train ASO providers in tobacco dependence treatment activities. This can be done through partnership, tobacco education and systems change interventions. The state Tobacco Control Program (TCP) approached the state office of HIV/AIDS to partner and fund a statewide pilot project for three years. They awarded the TCP $1.3 million annually to decrease tobacco use in the PLWH population beginning January 2015. The first significant policy outcome was expanding the MI AIDS Drug Assistance Program formulary to include all 7 FDA-approved tobacco treatment medications through the Formulary Committee. Treatment became more accessible and affordable on March 2015.

SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

The Tobacco Reduction in PLWH Project funds 2 FTE’s to educate ASO’s about tobacco prevention and dependence treatment. With this expertise ASO’s provide tobacco dependence treatment using clinical practice guidelines, the 5A’s (Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist and Arrange) with each client at every visit. Thirty-one (31) ASO employees have been trained as Tobacco Treatment Specialists (TTS) and up to 14 staff will complete a TTS certification. With this additional specialization, a greater amount of HIV+ clients will make tobacco quit attempts and ultimately quit for good. The 5A’s are also being documented electronically through CAREWare (CW). CW software is required for those agencies receiving federal (Ryan White) HIV+ treatment funding.

RESULTS

This project has highlighted the high tobacco use rates and poor health outcomes for PLWH using tobacco. ASO employees are now more aware of the problem and starting to consistently ask HIV+ clients if they use tobacco and provide treatment. Better quality statewide client and staff data was gathered to understand the problem and target interventions. Fourteen (14) focus groups were held with 92 HIV+ client tobacco users statewide. Analysis of these combined new data will guide creation of tobacco quit messages targeting HIV+ clients. Because of this project Michigan has up to 31 tobacco treatment experts working in 14 ASO’s statewide ready to deliver tobacco dependence treatment. Education, reliable data and consistent use of tobacco treatment guidelines will help extinguish the high smoking rate in PLWH improving health outcomes.

Contact
Lynne Stauff, MPA
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
Tobacco Control Program
109 W. Michigan Ave.
Lansing, MI 48913
517-335-1818 phone
http://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs

Success Stories
http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/