

# Enhancing Policy Effectiveness: Examining the Rollout of a Comprehensive Tobacco-Free Workplace Policy within Homeless-Serving Agencies and the Impact of Education Receipt

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## Introduction

- Tobacco use has been causally linked to at least 13 different types of cancer and 30% of cancer deaths in the U.S.
- Individuals experiencing homelessness use tobacco at elevated rates (~80%) compared to the general population (~12%).
- Consequently, this group experiences disproportionate cancer mortality and morbidity from tobacco use.
- Implementation of a tobacco-free workplace program that includes a tobacco-free workplace policy (TFWP) and employee training on the hazards of smoking and benefits of quitting can lead to reduced guest/client smoking in homeless-serving agencies (HSAs).
- However, the effectiveness of TFWP implementation hinges upon factors associated with rollout, and employee knowledge of the harms of smoking and benefits of quitting may affect these factors.
- TFWP effectiveness can be influenced by communication, awareness, enforcement, and compliance of various stakeholders at an agency.
- This study investigated how factors related to the rollout of a TFWP changed over time, with consideration of the effect of employee education receipt in HSAs.

## Methods

### Participants and Procedures

- A convenience sample of 3 HSAs agreed to participate in a tobacco-free workplace program; their employees consented to complete anonymous surveys before (N=18) and after (N=15) program implementation.

### Key Variables of Interest

- Face-valid items regarding a TFWP assessed whether employees believed that their agency:
  - Had clear signage of the policy (i.e., communication)
  - Ensured consistent enforcement of the policy
  - Enforced the policy in a fair manner
  - Ensured that the policy was followed (i.e., compliance)
- Employees also answered questions about whether:
  - They had received training on the hazards of smoking and benefits of quitting
  - Guests/clients, contractors, and visitors are aware of the agency's TFWP

## Results

**Table 1:** Changes in employees' perception of tobacco-free workplace policy communication, enforcement, compliance, and employee education receipt from pre- to post-implementation of a tobacco-free workplace program in 3 Texas homeless-serving agencies.

Variable	Pre	Post	p-value
Clear signage	61.11%	80.00%	0.422
Consistent enforcement	66.67%	80.00%	0.663
Fair enforcement	66.67%	80.00%	0.600
Compliance	72.22%	86.67%	0.549
<b>Education receipt</b>	<b>5.71%</b>	<b>46.67%</b>	<b>0.016</b>

Note. **Bold = p < 0.10.**

**Table 2:** Changes in employees' perception of different stakeholders' awareness of a tobacco-free workplace policy in 3 Texas homeless-serving agencies before and after the implementation of a tobacco-free workplace program.

Stakeholder	Pre	Post	p-value
<b>Guests/clients</b>	<b>55.56%</b>	<b>93.33%</b>	<b>0.051</b>
Contractors	50.00%	80.00%	0.153
Visitors	55.56%	86.67%	0.121

Note. **Bold = p < 0.10.**

**Table 3:** Changes in employees' perception of guests'/clients' and visitors' tobacco-free workplace policy awareness at agencies with larger changes in educational exposure over time.

Perceived policy awareness of...	Pre	Post	p-value
<b>Guests/ Clients</b>	<b>66.77%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0.095</b>
<b>Visitors</b>	<b>66.77%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0.095</b>

Note. Non-significant analyses were excluded from table; **bold = p < 0.10.**

## Analysis

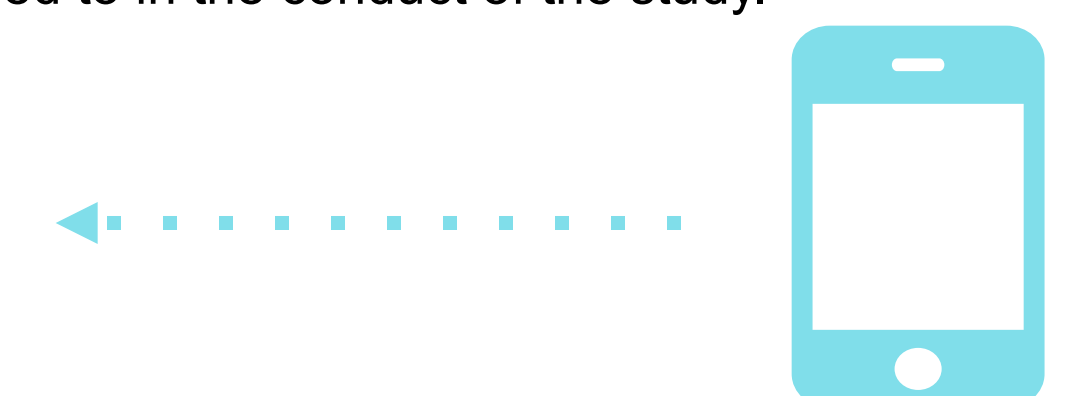
- Logistic regression analyses, controlling for agency, were used to investigate the effect of program implementation on TFWP communication (i.e., clear signage); consistent and fair TFWP enforcement; TFWP compliance; and guest/client, contractor, and visitor TFWP awareness.
- Effects were examined overall; analyses separated by change in employee education (median split; larger versus smaller changes in agency-level educational exposure from pre- to post-implementation) were conducted.
- $p < 0.10$  was considered significant for this study due to the small sample sizes.

## Conclusions

- Findings highlight the role of policy rollout factors in cultivating an anti-tobacco environment in HSAs, which in turn can reduce cancer-related morbidity and mortality from tobacco in this disparity group.
- Of rollout factors examined, only policy awareness significantly increased and only for guests/clients, the stakeholders with whom reporting employees most likely had the greatest contact and communication about the TFWP.
- Role playing how employees can advise contractors and visitors about the TFWP may be helpful to enhancing perceived awareness.
- Significant gain in other factors (communication, enforcement, compliance) may have been precluded by competing priorities of HSAs and employee turnover, which represent common implementation challenges in this setting.
- Education receipt was intended to encourage employees to challenge social norms and help their agency reduce tobacco use among guests/clients; larger changes in education exposure may have affected greater increases in employees' perceived guest/client and visitor TFWP awareness.
- Future work should: 1) reach more of the workforce with education; and 2) focus on capacity-building and tailoring program components for to maximize TFWP rollout effectiveness in HSAs.

## Disclosure

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