

# *Actual Evidence Project Brief*

## **Southeastern Pennsylvania Tobacco Control Project (SEPA TCP)**



Granting Organization: Pennsylvania Department of Health

Grantee Organization: Health Promotion Council

Award Amount: **\$32,448,289**

Period of Performance: **(FY2008-FY2013)**

Target Population: Residents of Southeastern Pennsylvania (Bucks, Berks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Montgomery and Schuylkill Counties)

### **Introduction**

The Southeastern Pennsylvania Tobacco Control Project (SEPA TCP) is administered by the Health Promotion Council (HPC) which subcontracts with fourteen organizations to provide tobacco prevention and cessation services throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania. SEPA TCP is part of the Pennsylvania Tobacco Prevention and Control Program and SEPA is the largest regional program in Pennsylvania. HPC has provided leadership and strategic direction to the SEPA TCP since the regional program began in October, 2007. HPC regionalizes statewide tobacco prevention and control initiatives, tailoring statewide programs to meet the specific needs of communities across SEPA while also providing grant administration, technical assistance and project oversight. SEPA TCP has also initiated pilot programs that are unique to the Southeast region.

### **Multi-Faceted Approach to Tobacco Control**

HPC uses a multi-faceted approach to reducing the impact and burden of tobacco use in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Tobacco Dependence Treatment (TDT) has been a core service of the SEPA TCP since it began in 2007. TDT services in community-based, clinical and workplace settings include prolonged treatment using both group and individual counseling, the provision of free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) and referrals to the Pennsylvania Free Quitline.

Another core service of the SEPA TCP is the enforcement of Pennsylvania's youth access to tobacco law through annual compliance checks of tobacco retailers in the region. Analysis of the results of these compliance checks provides an indicator of retailer compliance with the law throughout the region and identifies areas with higher and lower tobacco sales to minors. SEPA TCP has also been piloting Operation Storefront, a program that allows youth the opportunity to see firsthand how tobacco

companies use point of sale advertising to manipulate them into buying tobacco products.

SEPA TCP has implemented initiatives to assist schools and other worksites throughout the region to strengthen their tobacco policies. These efforts represent a shift from providing direct services in schools to assisting administrators and faculty to strengthen their policies in the hope that stronger anti-tobacco programs and policies will have an impact on tobacco use and exposure and also provide sustainable change that maximizes the resources of the SEPA TCP.

Young Lungs at Play (YLAP) is another policy-focused program that seeks to assist local municipalities and community programs to reduce exposure to tobacco smoke in parks, playgrounds and other places where children play. YLAP became part of the Pennsylvania Tobacco Prevention and Control Program less than a year ago, but SEPA TCP has been actively participating in the program on a voluntary basis since 2011.

SEPA TCP is currently regionalizing an integrated approach to worksite wellness. SEPA service providers will provide technical assistance not only around the improvement of tobacco-free policies for their employees and the provision of onsite TDT, but also will also work with employers on an integrated approach to assess and improve comprehensive worksite wellness policies.

### **SEPA TCP Service Providers and Partners**

#### Partners:

- **Pennsylvania Alliance to Control Tobacco (PACT)** provides training and technical assistance to SEPA service providers surrounding statewide tobacco prevention and control legislative priorities.
- HPC partners with the **Philadelphia Department of Public Health** to improve tobacco-related outcomes in Philadelphia and the surrounding counties.
- HPC partners with the **American Lung Association** to conceptualize and implement new approaches to reduce the burden of tobacco in Pennsylvania.

#### Service Providers:

- **Public Health Management Corporation** evaluates and reports outcomes on all SEPA TCP initiatives.
- **The University of Pennsylvania** provides training and strategic direction to SEPA TCP staff and service providers on TDT and medical oversight of the provision of NRT.
- **The Wellness Connection** provides video TDT counseling throughout Southeastern Pennsylvania.
- **Clean Air Council** provides technical assistance and resources to multi-unit housing communities who are interested in protecting their residents from the dangers of secondhand smoke by implementing tobacco-free policies.
- **Council on Chemical Abuse** provides community and worksite based TDT services and technical assistance to worksites in creating tobacco-free policies in Berks County.
- **Lebanon Family Health Services** provides community and worksite based TDT services and technical assistance to worksites in creating tobacco-free policies in Berks, Lancaster and Schuylkill Counties.
- **Council of Southeastern Pennsylvania** provides community and worksite based TDT services and technical assistance to worksites in creating tobacco-free policies, and conducts compliance checks at tobacco retailers in Berks County.
- **Bucks County Health Improvement Partnership** provides community and worksite based TDT services and technical assistance to worksites in creating tobacco-free policies in Bucks County.

- **ChesPenn Health Services** provides community and worksite based TDT services and technical assistance to worksites in creating tobacco-free policies in Chester and Delaware Counties, and brings to the project specific expertise in working with low-income communities.
- **Phoenixville Hospital** provides community and worksite based TDT services and technical assistance to worksites in creating tobacco-free policies in Chester and Montgomery Counties.
- **Holcomb Behavioral Health Systems** technical assistance to worksites in creating tobacco-free policies in Delaware and Montgomery Counties, and brings to the project specific expertise in working with behavioral health populations.
- **Main Line Health** provides community and worksite based TDT services and technical assistance to worksites in creating tobacco-free policies in Delaware and Montgomery Counties.
- **Lancaster General Hospital** provides community and worksite based TDT services and technical assistance to worksites in creating tobacco-free policies in Lancaster County.
- **Schuylkill Health System** provides community and worksite based TDT services and technical assistance to worksites in creating tobacco-free policies in Schuylkill County.

### **Evaluation Approach/Intended Outcomes**

The Research and Evaluation Group (REG) at Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC) evaluates the range of program approaches used by the SEPA TCP from direct services to tobacco users to efforts to strengthen tobacco policies and promote the integration of tobacco control and chronic disease programs. In addition, HPC uses PHMC's Household Survey Data to determine its effectiveness in reducing the rates of tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke.

### **Results and Evidence**

- Since 2007:
  - Smoking prevalence in Southeastern Pennsylvania has decreased from 17.8% in 2008 to 16.1% in 2012.
  - The percentage of individuals who are exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes has been reduced from 12.5% in 2008 to 10.2 % in 2012.
  - SEPA TCP service providers worked with more than 50 schools in Southeastern Pennsylvania to improve and strengthen their 100% Tobacco Free Schools policies, focusing on making policies more comprehensive and including measures for enforcement.
  - SEPA TCP service providers have conducted more than 27,000 compliance checks with tobacco merchants throughout SEPA, contributing to a decrease in the rate of tobacco sales to youth in Southeastern Pennsylvania from 13.15% in 2007 to 3.6% in 2011, as measured by the statewide Synar Survey.
  - TDT (Tobacco Dependence Treatment) Services were provided to more than 11,000 tobacco users.
- SEPA TCP TDT services are effective, with a quit rate of 42% in FY13 (clients who completed a six month follow-up survey reported that they have not smoked in the last 30 days).
- Since 2011, SEPA TCP staff and service providers have worked with 39 municipalities to create an ordinance, policy or resolution to support the Young Lungs at Play initiative and designate tobacco-free playground areas.
- In 2012 and 2013, youth in SEPA conducted Operation Storefront in approximately 600 tobacco merchants. Analysis of the data collected during the Operation Storefront pilot reveals that stores that sell tobacco products in SEPA often target children and youth with their placement of advertisements and, in some cases, tobacco products.

## Lessons Learned

- **Regionalization of statewide initiatives improves impact-** Regional tailoring of statewide approaches to tobacco prevention and control allows for targeting of specific populations and issues in various counties within each region.
- **The integration of tobacco use with other chronic disease risk factors is necessary to improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare-related costs in Pennsylvania –**  
This requires non-traditional partnerships that will leverage services and improve chronic disease prevention and management.
- **Persons with substance abuse addictions and/or mental health disorders face major health disparities related to tobacco use.** – Tobacco use rates in this population are disproportionately high, although they express a desire to quit using tobacco that is equal to the general population.
- **Systemic changes make the largest impact in reducing disparities in tobacco use prevalence –**  
These include the integration of tobacco treatment education and treatment services with other chronic disease prevention and management services, particularly in hospitals, at FQHCs, and within behavioral health clinics, facilities and private practice.
- **Tobacco companies continue to target youth with tobacco advertising at the point of sale.** - Education to youth is essential to counteract tobacco companies' powerful advertising campaigns, which include strategically placed ads and tobacco products.