

Tennessee Counties Help Pregnant Women Quit Smoking Through the Baby & Me Tobacco Free Program

After receiving their first tobacco settlement disbursement earmarked for tobacco control purposes, county health departments in Tennessee used the funds to implement the Baby & Me Tobacco Free program. This program helps pregnant women quit smoking by offering free tobacco cessation counseling sessions during pregnancy, and monthly diaper vouchers for one year postpartum if participants remain tobacco-free.

In 2013, Tennessee county health departments had their first opportunity to initiate new tobacco control programs upon receiving tobacco settlement funds earmarked for smoking cessation. After learning about the Baby & Me Tobacco Free (BMTF) smoking cessation program for pregnant women, officials in the Southeast Region of the Tennessee Department of Health implemented the program in all ten of the county health departments in 2014. Since then, the program has expanded to 92 of Tennessee's 95 counties, with each county individually deciding to offer the program to pregnant women who smoke. In total, about 4,000 women in Tennessee have participated in BMTF, and 68.3 percent of women who completed the program have quit smoking successfully, contributing to a 60 percent reduced odds of having a low birthweight baby.

Steps Taken:

- The Southeast Region of the Tennessee Department of Health identified pregnant women as a priority population for smoking cessation efforts due to high levels of pregnant women smoking during pregnancy.
 - In 2014, pregnant women in Tennessee smoked at almost twice as often (14.9%) as the national rate (8.4%). In one Southeast Region county, approximately 40 percent of pregnant women reported smoking during pregnancy.
 - A woman in Tennessee with four or more [adverse childhood experiences](#) (ACEs) is more likely to smoke cigarettes as a person with no ACEs.
 - In 2012, the infant mortality rate in Tennessee was 78% higher in women who smoked during pregnancy compared to women who did not smoke at all during pregnancy.
- Officials in the Southeast Region learned of the BMTF program after hearing Laurie Adams, BMTF executive director, speak about the program. BMTF is a private company that trains

- According to 2014 birth certificate data, 14.9 percent of pregnant women in Tennessee smoked during pregnancy, compared to 8.4 percent nationwide.
- About 4,000 pregnant women in Tennessee have participated in the Baby & Me Tobacco Free program since its implementation in April 2014.
- Women who have completed the program have 60 percent lesser odds of having a low birthweight baby, and have successfully quit smoking at a rate of 68.3 percent.

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health departments and other care providers nationwide to deliver their evidence-based curriculum to pregnant women who smoke.

- Tennessee administered the BMTF curriculum in April 2014 to county-level staff in all ten counties in the Southeast Region who received a one-day training from Adams.
- County health departments promote the BMTF program to pregnant women in Tennessee who want to quit smoking in the following manner:
 - Women are recruited via flyers and informational sessions in county health departments and other community centers.
 - Women of any income level in Tennessee are eligible to enroll in BMTF free of charge if they are pregnant and currently smoke. They do not need to be residents of a county offering the program in order to participate.
 - Participants visit the county health department for up to four one-on-one cessation counseling and support sessions scheduled throughout the pregnancy. In Tennessee, counseling sessions are usually provided by nurses or nutrition educators trained to deliver the BMTF curriculum.
 - A quit date before a participant's due date is established. Participants are breath tested for carbon monoxide (CO) during sessions to assess smoking status and track progress. Women who attend at least three counseling sessions are considered to have completed the BMTF program.
 - After giving birth, participants are eligible to receive one \$25 diaper voucher per month for 12 months postpartum if they have completed the program and CO testing indicates they have remained smoke-free. Women visit their county health department each month to be tested and receive their voucher.
- After the program was successfully implemented in Southeast region counties, additional county health departments elected to use tobacco settlement funds to implement BMTF. Because county health departments individually received tobacco settlement dollars, county and regional level directors looking for effective ways to spend these funds communicated with one another and decided to offer the BMTF curriculum. The program is currently offered in 92 of Tennessee's 95 counties, making BMTF widely available to pregnant women in Tennessee who want to quit smoking.

Results:

- Since 2014, approximately 4,000 pregnant women in Tennessee have enrolled in BMTF, with 36 percent of these 4,000 participants completing the program by attending at least three prenatal counseling sessions (in 2014, Tennessee had 91,313 reported pregnancies). Though pregnant women of all income levels are eligible to join, approximately 85 percent of participants are enrolled in income-based county health department programs, such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. This indicates that BMTF may be helping to reduce health disparities and remove barriers to tobacco cessation services for this population in Tennessee.
- According to a [peer-reviewed article](#) written by the Tennessee Department of Health exploring the impacts of the BMTF program in Tennessee, women who attended at least three counseling sessions have 60 percent lesser odds of having a low birthweight baby compared to pregnant smokers who didn't participate in the program. The study also found that completing the BMTF

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program was associated with a 68.3 percent smoking cessation rate as verified by breathalyzer CO testing.

- According to Tennessee Department of Health research, each low birthweight delivery prevented is associated with a savings of \$90,000 in healthcare costs. In 2014 alone, BMTF was associated with 25 low birthweight deliveries prevented in 349 participants, which corresponds to a cost savings of \$2.25 million. Other studies indicate that quitting smoking while pregnant can reduce the risk of stillbirths, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and other health complications for the child.

Lessons Learned:

- Securing the use of tobacco settlement funds for tobacco control programs at the county level can make significant state-wide improvements in tobacco cessation within vulnerable populations. Pregnant women in Tennessee currently have the ability to visit almost any county health department for smoking cessation counseling free of charge, in part because tobacco settlement funds were specifically allocated to reduce smoking among this population.
- An alignment of multiple incentives can contribute to a program's success. Pregnant women in Tennessee who have participated in BMTF report wanting to quit smoking for themselves and their child. The monthly \$25 voucher is an additional incentive that helps encourages eligible participants to enroll in the program and stay tobacco-free after giving birth.
- Leveraging the use of an existing curriculum designed to help pregnant women quit smoking is an effective model to encourage smoking cessation for this priority population and improves the health of newborn children as well. BMTF is currently offered to pregnant women throughout Tennessee because county health departments and regional offices of the Tennessee Department of Health adopted this existing program.

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For more information, see the [journal article](#) about the outcomes of Tennessee's BMTF initiatives, and the [BMTF website](#).