

Texas Department of State Health Services Builds Partnerships to Deliver Tobacco Control Resources to Texas' LGBT Population

The Tobacco Prevention & Control Branch within the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) recognized a need to deliver tobacco control resources to their state's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. The Tobacco Prevention & Control Branch partnered with DSHS's Texas Comprehensive Cancer Control Program and the TB/HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis Unit to disseminate toolkits and other materials to LGBT Texans through clinical partners and targeted media placement. Resources from LGBT HealthLink, a national organization that works to reduce LGBT health disparities, were used in the planning process to ensure that outreach efforts were effective and culturally competent.

In August 2014, DSHS's Tobacco Prevention & Control Branch began improving the quitline utilization among Texas's LGBT community, as LGBT individuals use the quitline less than other communities in Texas. Since the Tobacco Prevention & Control Branch did not have experience reaching out to the LGBT population in Texas, they partnered with the Texas Comprehensive Cancer Control Program and the TB/HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis Unit within DSHS to deliver tobacco cessation resources to HIV clinics. Additional components to this outreach included a media campaign, an informational webinar, and the building of partnerships with Texas LGBT stakeholders, ensuring that tobacco cessation efforts tailored to the LGBT community were meaningful, culturally competent, and sustainable.

Steps Taken:

- The Tobacco Prevention & Control Branch, the Texas Comprehensive Cancer Control Program, and the TB/HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis Unit within DSHS partnered to deliver "Ask, Advise, Refer" smoking cessation toolkits to over 500 HIV clinics and care providers in Texas. These toolkits contained information on smoking tailored to the HIV+ population. This was a strategic partnership for LGBT outreach, as more

- Texas is home to the second highest number of same-sex households of any state.
- Approximately 3 percent of Texas identifies as LGBT, but only 0.15 percent of this population utilized tobacco quitline services in 2014.
- 34.5 percent of Texans who reported same-sex or bisexual behavior were also current smokers (2013), compared to 15.9 percent of the general population.
- Texas' LGBT outreach efforts were associated with a 175 percent increase in LGBT quitline registrants in June 2015 compared to June 2014.

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than two-thirds of HIV diagnoses and about half of those living with HIV in Texas are men who have sex with men, a group that often identifies as LGBT.

- In collaboration with the Tobacco Research and Evaluation Team at The University of Texas at Austin, DSHS conducted a live webinar on the “Ask, Advise, Refer” protocol and HIV-specific tobacco education to over 50 clinical partners. This was part of a publicity effort aimed at reaching local and regional health departments, as well as clinical care providers, with the goal of giving stakeholders an opportunity to be involved in targeted tobacco control efforts.
- Texas used the HIV+ visual advertisement from the [Cigarettes are My Greatest Enemy](#) campaign, developed in 2003, to deliver tobacco-free messaging to the LGBT community. Texas rebranded the campaign materials to include information on Texas’s quitline and placed the advertisement in LGBT-friendly print and digital media outlets in Texas’s major metropolitan markets. *L Style G Style*, a digital magazine based in Austin, Texas, developed a [series of editorials](#) to complement the advertisement and direct readers to the state’s quitline website or toll-free number for free cessation assistance.
- In all outreach efforts, Texas relied on online resources and technical assistance provided by LGBT HealthLink to ensure that materials provided were culturally competent and effective at improving the health of this priority population. Resources referenced include Texas’s [2014 State LGBT Smoking Report Cards](#), the [“It’s Time for Smoking to Come Out of the Closet” infographic](#), and the [MPOWERED LGBT Tobacco Program Best Practices](#) guide.

Results:

- The use of the “Cigarettes are My Greatest Enemy” campaign advertisement resulted in 2.3 million impressions after an \$85,000 investment by the Texas Comprehensive Cancer Control Program.
- In June 2015, the first month of the media campaign and one month after DSHS held the training webinar about its HIV/LGBT smoking cessation efforts, DSHS found a 41 percent increase in LGBT quitline registrants compared to the average over the three previous months. This was a 175 percent increase in state quitline registrations among persons identifying as LGBT compared to June 2014, before any LGBT outreach efforts had been initiated.
- The webinar provided an opportunity for the Texas/Oklahoma AIDS Education and Training Center (AETC) to fulfill a HRSA requirement that states collaborate with their public health department. AETC promoted the webinar, provided a digital copy of the “Ask, Advise, Refer” toolkit on their website, and distributed information via listserv.
- Following these outreach initiatives, AIDS Arms Inc., an HIV/AIDS community center based in Dallas, integrated e-tobacco protocols into their electronic medical records system, which represents a broad-based integration of tobacco cessation services with existing HIV treatment.
- As a result of these initiatives, DSHS formed new partnerships and built social capital with LGBT community organizations in Texas. For example, in 2015, DSHS staff were invited to present at the [Texas Transgender Nondiscrimination Summit](#), the annual DSHS HIV Syndicate Meeting, and

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the [LGBT HealthLink Steering Committee E-Summit](#). DSHS has also been able to engage Ryan White Planning Councils and local LGBT community centers, such as the Lesbian Health Initiative, Inc. of Houston, to deliver quitline information and referrals at their semiannual medical outreach events. These partnerships and speaking opportunities continue to build trust and goodwill between the Tobacco Prevention & Control Branch and Texas's LGBT community.

Lessons Learned:

- Partnering with DSHS's TB/HIV/STD/Viral Hepatitis Unit was essential in allowing chronic disease programs, such as the Tobacco Prevention & Control Branch and the Texas Comprehensive Cancer Control Program, to extend their outreach to Texas's LGBT population. The Unit's established relationship with men who have sex with men through their HIV work supported the distribution of tobacco resources to LGBT community members throughout Texas. Partnerships and social capital among LGBT stakeholders in Texas improved the Tobacco Prevention & Control Branch's reach, maximizing the impact of cessation efforts.
- Utilizing existing resources and campaign materials helped DSHS's Tobacco Prevention & Control Branch deliver effective and culturally competent tobacco cessation and tobacco-free messaging to the LGBT community. DSHS rebranded the "Cigarettes are My Greatest Enemy" campaign materials, utilized LGBT HealthLink's online resources, and established partnerships with local LGBT community groups and stakeholders to more effectively deliver smoking cessation messaging and resources to this priority population.

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Those interested in learning more can visit DSHS's [Yes Quit](#) state quitline webpage or the [LGBT HealthLink](#) website.