

New guides developed to help communities address tobacco issues

February 11 2014, by Leslie Gibson Mccarthy

In January of 1964, the surgeon general released the first "Report on Smoking and Health," a landmark report that linked tobacco smoke to heart disease and lung cancer and laid the foundation for tobacco-control efforts in the United States.

Since then, 31 Surgeon General's Reports have been released, including the latest, "The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress," released Jan. 11. The anniversary report specifically called for tobacco-control policies to increase the price of tobacco products and implement smoke-free policies.

"Tremendous progress has been made in the 50 years after the release of the first Surgeon General's Report," said Douglas A. Luke, PhD, professor in the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis and director of the Center for Public Health Systems Science (CPHSS). "Adult smoking rates have fallen from 43 percent in 1965 to 18 percent today.

"Cigarette smoking, however, continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in this country. We must renew our efforts with the tobacco-control interventions that we know work, like tax increases and smoke-free policies," he said.

CPHSS, in partnership with the Tobacco Control Legal Consortium, a program of the Public Health Law Center in St. Paul, Minn., has published two new tobacco-control guides—one on policy strategies and

another on pricing policy—that aim to give state and local communities the guidance and resources needed to move these policies forward.

"The timing couldn't be better," Luke said, "with this 50th anniversary report and with the announcement last week that CVS, the nation's second-largest drugstore chain, was going to stop selling all tobacco products. CPHSS' tobacco-control guides offer strategies and solutions to help communities drive down tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure."

The publications are designed to provide national, state and local tobacco-control partners with practical guidance on selecting and implementing evidence-based tobacco-control strategies.

CPHSS mailed printed copies of both guides to every state tobacco-control manager Feb. 3, and the center is conducting a media and email campaign to get the word out to national tobacco-control partners, guide contributors and other key stakeholders in the tobacco fight.

The guides provide a one-two punch:

Policy Strategies provides guidance on how to work with the media, coalitions, decision makers, business owners and communities to create smoke-free environments, increase the cost of tobacco products and restrict access to such products.

Pricing Policy focuses on how to implement policies that effectively raise the cost of [tobacco products](#), including excise tax increases, nontax price-related policies and enforcement measures.

The guides include strategies to help tobacco-control proponents, such as:

- select and implement evidence-based tobacco-control strategies;
- learn from case studies of other practitioners' successes;
- provide information to stakeholders to gain support for tobacco-control efforts; and
- identify the best resources and tools to increase knowledge and capacity around the topic.

"The health effects of tobacco use are staggering," said principal investigator Sarah Moreland-Russell, PhD, assistant research professor and associate director of the CPHSS. "Even though we've been fighting this battle for over 50 years, there's still a long way to go.

"The [surgeon general](#)'s most recent report confirms that comprehensive tobacco-control programs and policies are effective," she said, "but further gains can be made. These guides are designed to help communities implement evidence-based policy strategies in their communities to reduce tobacco use and exposure."

More information: To learn more about CPHSS and the guides, visit cphss.wustl.edu and publichealthlawcenter.org.

Provided by Washington University in St. Louis

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