

## **SHIP Tobacco-free Worksites Initiative**

### **Final evaluation report**

*Prepared for Le Sueur-Waseca Public Health as part of their SHIP evaluation*

Le Sueur-Waseca Public Health is collaborating with worksites in their service area on SHIP Tobacco-free Worksites Initiatives that focus on implementing worksite policies for tobacco-free grounds, including parking lots. The initiative also seeks to implement mechanisms that connect people with existing cessation services such as quit lines, quitting websites, and face-to-face counseling. The American Lung Association-Minnesota (ALA) has been engaged through this initiative. The project is part of a larger effort by Le Sueur-Waseca Public Health, which is funded by the Minnesota Department of Health's Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP).

This report provides a snapshot of the overall impact of this initiative, with emphasis on reporting for the most recent evaluation period (January 2011 through July 2011). This report was prepared by Wilder Research. Le Sueur-Waseca SHIP and ALA compiled existing data and collected original data as a part of this evaluation, using tools developed by Wilder Research.

### **Reach**

Le Sueur-Waseca's service area includes a workforce of approximately 24,037 throughout the two counties. Le Sueur-Waseca SHIP is working with four worksites. In total, these worksites have 967 employees, which is 4 percent of the total workforce in the two counties.

<b>Worksite</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Employees</b>	<b>Total directly affected</b>
Le Sueur County	Le Sueur	200	200
Birds Eye/General Foods	Waseca	500	500
Minnesota Valley Health Care Center	Le Sueur	165	165
Waseca County	Waseca	102	102
<b>Total</b>		<b>967</b>	<b>967</b>

## **Activities**

Le Sueur-Waseca SHIP staff and ALA worked with some of the participating worksites to complete an evaluation of current workplace tobacco policies and practices as well as to survey employees to gauge interest in the initiative.

### *Employee interest survey*

A survey was conducted in fall 2010 with Le Sueur County employees to assess their interest in health-related worksite changes, including tobacco-free policies. Seventy-eight employees completed the survey. There was great support for providing a tobacco-free workplace and grounds, in that 69 percent of respondents stated their interest was “very high” or “high.” Thirty-nine percent of respondents also indicated that their interest was “very high” or “high” in having their workplace providing tobacco cessation support.

Many respondents were unsure of the tobacco-related benefits their health insurance plan currently provides. Fifty-seven percent of respondents did not know if their insurance company offered incentives for good health or a healthy lifestyle, including a non-smoking discount. Half of respondents are unaware of smoking cessation services through their health insurance plan. These results were used by SHIP staff, ALA, and Le Sueur County as they implemented a tobacco-free worksite policy.

### *Presentations and trainings*

Other worksites in the area that were interested in this initiative were identified by presentations at the Waseca Rotary Club, Waseca and Le Sueur Chamber of Commerce events, Waseca and Janesville Kiwanis meetings, and the Waseca Mayo Clinic Health System Freedom From Smoking Training. Each worksite was provided with any information that was discussed during the meetings.

### *Technical assistance*

ALA staff made contact with worksites and worked directly with wellness staff at each participating site to provide assessment and implementation assistance. Each of the four worksites received consultation on their existing tobacco policies to identify areas for improvement. They also received assistance with the policy process, including information on drafting, adopting, and implementing a tobacco-free worksite policy.

## **Policy, systems, and environments**

One of the goals of SHIP is to change policies, systems, and environments to make the healthy choice the easy choice and to ensure sustainability beyond the end of any one particular program or funding stream. In the case of the Tobacco-free Worksites Initiative,

it means specifically changing policies, systems, and environments in the workplace to create tobacco-free grounds and to connect employees to tobacco cessation services.

The initiative has been successful in the creation of several tobacco-free worksite policies in Le Sueur and Waseca counties. Achievements include:

- The Le Sueur County Board adopted a policy on April 12, 2011, to prohibit tobacco use on Le Sueur County Governmental Buildings and Properties, vehicles, and grounds. This includes the Le Sueur County Courthouse, Le Sueur County Law Enforcement Center, Le Sueur County Highway Department (including all shops), Le Sueur County Environmental Services, and Le Sueur County Parks (buildings and structures only). Tobacco use by employees is also prohibited during the performance of job duties, unless they are in their own enclosed vehicle or home and no County client is present. The policy went into effect June 1, 2011.
- Discussions began with Waseca County to adopt and implement a tobacco-free grounds policy within all governmental building and properties. Waseca County officials are monitoring reactions to the Le Sueur County tobacco-free worksite policy, and will decide whether to implement their policy based on feedback.
- The Minnesota Valley Health Care Center created and implemented a tobacco-free grounds policy.
- ALA provided Birds Eye Foods with information on tobacco-free grounds policy enforcement, and worked with them on strategies to increase employee policy compliance.
- Tobacco cessation resources, such as information on the benefits of creating a comprehensive tobacco cessation strategy, were provided to Le Sueur County, Waseca County, Birds Eye Foods, the Minnesota Valley Health Care Center, and Waseca Mayo Clinic Health System. Additional resources were provided if requested.

**The work of each of the sites is somewhat sustainable – some work may be sustained, but additional efforts, such as signs or other forms of enforcement, are needed to ensure implementation.**

### **Longer-term impact**

According to the 2010 Southwest/South Central Adult Health Survey, 14 percent of Le Sueur and Waseca county residents currently smoke. Additionally, 12 percent of Le Sueur and Waseca county residents have used other tobacco products such as snuff, chewing tobacco, cigars, or pipes in the past 12 months. Nearly 4 out of 10 respondents had been exposed to secondhand smoke in the past seven days. One-third of respondents

who are employed had been exposed to smoke just outside their workplace doors, and 28 percent had been exposed to smoke in outdoor smoking areas that are at least 20 feet from doors. This data shows a need to pursue tobacco-free workplace initiatives and continue existing work presently being done in this area.

As all of these efforts continue, short-term outcomes will include having an increased number of worksites in the counties adopting and enforcing tobacco-free policies, increasing the number of worksites who provide tobacco cessation resources to their employees, and increasing the number of employees within the two counties who use tobacco cessation resources provided by their employers. Intermediate outcomes will be a decreased percentage of Le Sueur County and Waseca county residents who use tobacco, and a decreased percentage of residents who are exposed to secondhand smoke. This will ultimately lead to a decreased percentage of Le Sueur and Waseca county residents who have chronic diseases associated with tobacco use and exposure.



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