

Vernon County Health Department

318 Fairlane Drive (Co Hwy BB) PO Box 209 Viroqua, WI 54665-0209
Phone 608-637-5251 • FAX 608-637-5514

Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 45 million Americans smoke cigarettes, and the United States Department of Health & Human Services reports that half of all long term smokers die prematurely from tobacco related disease. All tobacco products including smokeless tobacco are addictive and can cause cancer.

Smoking (use of any tobacco) is a serious public health issue in Vernon County, Wisconsin and the United States, and in order to remove this public health threat, comprehensive tobacco prevention and control programs and the ability to change policy must exist in every state.

The mission of a comprehensive tobacco control program is to reduce disease, disability, and death related to tobacco use. The goals for comprehensive tobacco control programs include preventing youth from starting to use tobacco products, promoting quitting among adults and teens who do use tobacco products, eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke, and identifying and eliminating tobacco related disparities.

The Wisconsin Tobacco Control Program is focusing its efforts on a comprehensive tobacco control plan by expanding current tobacco control activities to cover all of Wisconsin's counties, and is working toward a comprehensive statewide smoke free air policy that will protect all Wisconsinites from secondhand smoke. This comprehensive policy would prohibit smoking in all indoor public places and workplaces including restaurants and taverns.

According to the CDC, our nation spends more than \$260 million dollars a day in direct medical costs related to smoking and nearly \$270 million in lost productivity due to premature deaths from tobacco related diseases. Comprehensive statewide tobacco control programs coupled with comprehensive statewide policies that prohibit smoking in all indoor public places can drastically reduce these costs and significantly improve the health and productivity of our state and nation.

For more information about the Wisconsin Tobacco Control Program please see the Department of Health Services website at <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/tobacco/> or contact Vernon County Health Department at (608) 637-5251.