



EMERGING Promising Practices

Mobilizing Faith Communities in Support of Tobacco Control Policies:

Creation of the Hoosier Faith and Health Coalition



HFHC members gather for a vigil at the Indiana Statehouse in remembrance of people who died of tobacco-related illnesses.



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PROBLEM ADDRESSED

In Indiana, every year more than 19,000 children become addicted to tobacco, of whom a third will die prematurely because of this addiction. In 2010 more than 9,700 Hoosiers (as residents of Indiana are known) will die from tobacco use and thousands more will suffer illness and health problems caused by smoking and secondhand smoke. Smoking-related health problems cost Indiana a total of more than \$2 billion per year, including more than \$478 million paid by the state Medicaid program with taxpayer dollars.

Indiana receives more than \$125 million in settlement payments each year from the tobacco companies through the Master Settlement Agreement. The Indiana Legislature uses this money and other revenue to fund the Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Commission (ITPC), an agency that focuses exclusively on these issues. ITPC received \$35 million during its first year, but the Legislature has been reducing this amount ever since. In 2011, ITPC is expected to receive less than \$10 million. The CDC-recommended funding for Indiana is \$78.8 million.

ITPC has been very effective at reducing smoking rates in youth and adults. Nonetheless, the 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) indicates that 23% of adults are still smoking and 18% of high school youth smoke. ITPC has effectively been mobilizing youth advocates through VOICE, creating capacity at the county level through coalitions, building leadership in minority communities, partnering with health care providers, sponsoring smoke-free events and venues, launching a strong multimedia counter-advertising campaign and providing Quitline and other cessation services, but without adequate funding it cannot sustain its gains.

Although Latino communities in Indiana represent only 6% of the state population, the Indiana Latino Institute (ILI), a statewide agency, has been able to build tobacco control leadership and capacity in eight counties and has become a leader in tobacco control through a strong partnership with ITPC and engagement in the tobacco control movement.

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

People of faith believe that the body is a spiritual temple. They have an essential interest in reducing tobacco use and the toll of tobacco-related illnesses, particularly among children and youth who are targeted by the tobacco industry. Indiana is one of the states where new tobacco products are tested and launched; therefore, faith and health activists have to be aware and engaged to expose new tobacco industry tactics.

The participants are members of the Hoosier Faith and Health Coalition (HFHC). The HFHC includes members from different faith groups: Christians of many denominations, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and others. Also part of this coalition are members of the public health community, including national groups such as the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (TFK), Americans for Non-Smokers' Rights, the American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association, and the American Heart Association. These national groups provide technical assistance, funding for advocacy and timely media support. At the state level, the HFHC includes agencies such as ILI, the Minority Health Coalition, and the Indiana Public Health Association, among others.

See: www.hoosierhealthandfaith.org



HFHC members meet with Gov. Mitch Daniels at the Indiana State House to present the smoke-free resolution.

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DESCRIPTION OF INNOVATIVE ACTIVITY

Key components are:

- Building and creating coalitions with faith communities and health advocates;
- Training on how to build relationships with state legislators;
- Conducting media outreach, including training on how to organize press conferences, write op-eds, etc.;
- Engaging faith and health community members in advocacy;
- Distributing educational materials on tobacco control;
- Creating alliances with other community-based organizations (CBOs) on topics of joint interest, such as domestic violence, to gain the support of faith groups.

“Because of our beliefs, we have an essential interest in reducing the toll of tobacco, particularly among children and youth who are targeted by the tobacco industry,” says Rev. Dan Gangler, Director of Communications, Indiana Area United Methodist Church, and HFHC Co-Chair.

PROGRAM PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

This process started through a technical assistance agreement between the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (TFK) and ILI. The ILI is a statewide agency building capacity and leadership in Latino communities to address health and educational needs. ILI received funding from ITPC to build leadership and capacity in Latino communities to engage in tobacco control. In addition, ILI received minimum funding from TFK to convene a small

group of churches in Indiana whose national offices were engaged in tobacco control. ILI created and maintained a database for HFHC from its inception. Members of the Methodist and Adventist churches were the first to begin. They came together and invited other faith groups interested in health and tobacco control issues. Members of county-level tobacco control programs, Smoke Free Indy, Indiana Campaign for Smoke Free Air, and others took it upon themselves to visit churches, to engage interfaith groups and ultimately involve them in tobacco control by encouraging participation in the HFHC. During the visits, the church leadership was encouraged to sign a resolution in support of tobacco control and health and in support of funding for programs to effectively reduce tobacco use among youth.

ILI staff visited all of the Latino pastors and priests of the Latino faith groups, translated the resolution and obtained their support. ILI built relationships with Latino CBOs and specific faith groups in order to make tobacco control an important issue. This required supporting the issues vital to those faith groups first, and then, once a relationship was established, educating them on tobacco.

TFK hired Vinnie DeMarco (see Resources section), a consultant from Maryland. Mr. DeMarco helped HFHC strategize and provide training on how to conduct visits at the State House and write press releases on the importance of tobacco control and faith community support for the following policy initiatives:

- a) The ITPC budget for tobacco control programs and activities;
- b) A statewide clean indoor air ordinance;
- c) Clean indoor air ordinances in various cities;
- d) Raising taxes at the state level.

ILI was the convener of the HFHC. ILI built, updated and maintained the database of all the faith and health groups attending the meetings and signing the resolutions. From the beginning, ILI played a leading role by convening meetings, drafting agendas, drafting minutes of the meetings, and providing training and materials at each of the meetings. The

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Coalition drafted the attached resolution in English and ILLI translated/adapted it into Spanish with participation from all of its members. **The resolutions were based on data from Indiana but can be adopted or modified by any other state.** The Coalition meets monthly and receives information about developments throughout the year.

Each year, there is a breakfast or lunch gathering of the Coalition. During this event, the members take actions such as writing letters, signing petitions, signing resolutions and other advocacy activities. Also each year, a large group of HFHC members visit the state legislators, sometimes for Valentine's Day, to let them know about the importance of tobacco programs and other policy initiatives. They have advocated for tobacco control and educated the legislators, the governor, the press and city council members. They have written op-eds, sent letters to the editors of local and state newspapers, held press conferences, and sponsored a full-page ad in the Indianapolis Star with the names of the partners who support tobacco control funding and policies.



First meeting of the Hoosier Faith & Health Coalition.

The faith and health groups are located in almost every county in the state, thereby representing the local constituencies of state legislators. The Coalition's strength lies not only in its interfaith nature, but also in its linkages with ITPC and established public health groups and minority groups from around the state.

THE SETTING: ESSENTIAL FAITH-BASED COMMUNITY RESOURCES

The needed resources are:

- Members of faith-based organizations;
- A lead organization with strong visionary leadership, credibility, convening capacity and infrastructure able to develop agendas and provide support for the coalition;
- The ability to create and maintain a database of all the faith and health groups attending the meetings and signing the resolutions;
- Space, equipment and materials to conduct meetings;
- Financial resources for training and consultant fees and for yearly events;
- A consultant with experience putting these coalitions together and with a record of success in other states;
- Support from the state tobacco control agency;
- Support from national advocacy organizations such as the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids;
- A website with information about the coalition's efforts; and
- A listserv or discussion list to engage members such as faithhealth-talk, HFHC's discussion list.

SKILLS USED

Key personnel must have leadership skills, knowledge of the health effects of tobacco and of tobacco control funding and policy issues, and experience working with faith communities. It is recommended to have two key staff members who can organize meetings effectively and build strong productive relationships with various constituencies. Media skills, advocacy skills and knowledge of the legislative and budgetary processes at the state level are also necessary.

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EVALUATION MEASURES

This effort was not evaluated in a formal way. There were no qualitative or quantitative studies. When it began, engagement of the faith community in tobacco control in Indiana was minimal. Six years later, there are over 800 faith groups engaged in tobacco control, representing thousands of parishioners. In the first few years, HFHC members were effective in defending funding levels, but the state's deficits have hampered funding streams and the MSA and other funds are being used to pay for other programs. The Coalition engaged in the statewide clean indoor air ordinance effort as well as several local ordinances, obtaining a total of more than 6,000 signatures for resolutions in support of these initiatives. The statewide effort has not yet passed, but cities in 32 local communities now have clean indoor air ordinances. Taxes were raised twice, from 15.5 cents to 55.5 cents in 2003 and to 99.5 cents in 2007. Coalition representatives continue their efforts, which are essential to the movement.

SUSTAINING THIS INNOVATION

Providing continuous support and engaging faith and health communities are the two key elements for sustaining this activity. It is vital to have the leadership of a community-based organization that can be responsible for updating coalition data and organizing meetings and events. In addition, it is necessary that the public health community and the state tobacco control agency fully understand the value of engaging faith communities and their unique role in defending tobacco control achievements, maintaining funding levels and moving policies forward.

Coalition Achievements

In HFHC's first year, over 400 faith groups signed the resolution which was sent to members of the State Legislature for their consideration. In the following 6 years, the number of faith groups increased from 400 to 800. Each of the faith groups included in its signed resolution the number of parishioners who were in the churches/synagogues and/or mosques. The number of people represented by each of the resolutions was truly impressive. To date there are thousands of parishioners represented in HFHC.

Indiana's tobacco prevention efforts are working and must continue to be strengthened. The efforts of the Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Commission (ITPC) and its many local partners have resulted in a 42% drop in Hoosier high school smoking since 2000 and a 15% drop in adult smoking since 2001.



A community outreach specialist addresses a youth congregation at a local church on the subject of tobacco-related health risks.

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ADAPTATION BY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Following are some suggestions that other organizations may consider based on the principles and lessons learned from this activity:

- Involve state tobacco control program and other public health advocacy groups in the coalition;
- Start small, with one or two faith groups, and have them invite others;
- Engage everyone when developing resolutions and creating a coalition;
- Reach out to minority communities in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner;
- Keep the coalition updated on the latest tobacco control issues and activated with Action Alerts;
- Continue educating the community-based groups and faith groups;
- Convene face-to-face meetings of the whole coalition in order to maintain high-levels of group enthusiasm.



State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe addresses HFHC members during an annual breakfast in support of their commitment to a smoke-free lifestyle.

Lessons Learned

- Be inclusive of all faiths and racial and ethnic groups from the beginning.
- Have a consultant who has the credibility to keep the effort going.
- Have faith communities invite others and energize their own membership statewide.
- Use key dates such as Valentine's Day to advocate, hold vigils, and organize other innovative activities.
- Keep having face-to-face meetings in order to energize the coalition so that members will not lose interest.
- Celebrate your advocates' achievements by giving awards and other honors.
- Ensure that the coalition is working towards specific goals and/or winnable battles.
- Share leadership roles so that many faith leaders take turns as coalition co-chairs.
- Use the media by inviting them to your events, writing press releases, etc.
- Educate the faith community about new tobacco industry tactics.
- Ask for technical assistance from the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, Americans for Non-Smokers' Rights, or others as needed.



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HOOSIER FAITH AND HEALTH COALITION SMOKING REDUCTION RESOLUTION

WHEREAS: As people of faith, we believe that the body is a spiritual temple, we therefore have an essential interest in reducing the toll of tobacco, particularly among children and youth who are targeted by the tobacco industry;

WHEREAS: Every year more than 9,900 Hoosier children become addicted to tobacco, of whom a third will die prematurely because of this addiction. This year more than 9,700 Hoosiers will die from tobacco use and thousands more will suffer from illness and health problems caused by smoking and secondhand smoke. Smoking-caused health problems cost Indiana a total of more than \$2 billion per year, including more than \$487 million paid for by the state Medicaid program with taxpayer dollars;

WHEREAS: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and other experts have established that fully funding state tobacco prevention programs, increasing taxes on tobacco, and prohibiting smoking in workplaces, including restaurants and bars, substantially decrease smoking and other tobacco use, particularly among children, thereby reducing tobacco-caused harms and costs;

WHEREAS: Indiana's tobacco prevention efforts are working and must continue and strengthen. The efforts of the Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program (ITPC) and its many state and local partners has resulted in a 42% decrease in Hoosier high school smoking since 2000 and a decrease in adult smoking, to 23%, which is the lowest levels to date.

WHEREAS: Indiana receives more than \$125 million in settlement payments each year from the tobacco companies, the Indiana Legislature uses this tobacco settlement money to fund the ITPC at approximately \$10 million per year, which is just a fraction of the funding it had several years ago; be it:

RESOLVED: That the undersigned endorses comprehensive and effective public policy measures to prevent and reduce smoking and other tobacco use in the state particularly among children, including to:

- Fund Indiana's tobacco prevention and cessation programs at the Indiana Tobacco Prevention & Cessation Agency (ITPC) to at least \$78.8 million annually, the level recommended by the Centers for Disease Control;
- Significantly increase Indiana's tobacco tax to advance tobacco control, using the revenue to fund tobacco prevention and other critical health programs;
- Ensure that all workplaces throughout the state are completely smoke free at all times, including restaurants, bars and casinos.

Through its signature below, the _____ (Name of congregation)

of _____ (City), Indiana, confirms its support for each and all of the above goals, joins the Hoosier

Health and Faith Coalition and the Indiana Campaign for Smokefree Air, and hereby asks the members of the Indiana General Assembly to take effective action to promote and achieve the above goals as quickly as possible. The undersigned also authorizes and encourages the Hoosier Health and Faith Coalition to use this signed Resolution to promote the above goals.

Organization Name: _____ Number of Members: _____

Title: Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr./Other: _____ Contact Person (Print): _____

Address, City, State, Zip: _____

Phone, Fax, E-mail: _____

Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please Print Name: _____ Title: _____

Please return to the Hoosier Faith and Health Coalition, c/o Aida McCammon, 445 N. Pennsylvania Ave. Suite 800, Indianapolis, IN 46204 Fax: (317) 472-1056 Phone: (317) 472-1055. Thank you

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Faith leaders defend anti-smoking agency

By staff writer

The Indianapolis Star

April 25, 2011 ET

As faith leaders, we are extremely disappointed by what the Senate Appropriations Committee proposes to do to the Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation agency of state government.

First, the committee is recommending a \$5 million budget for ITPC. That's a cut of more than \$4 million from the governor's proposed budget for ITPC and half of what ITPC receives now.

Second, the proposal folds ITPC into the State Department of Health, ending its status as an independent agency. All these actions were done with no public hearing. Why Indiana's highly successful, 10-year old tobacco prevention and cessation agency has been targeted is a mystery.

This action is unacceptable to those of us in the faith communities who work with and support the efforts of ITPC statewide to reduce the use of tobacco in Indiana. For more than five years we have tried unsuccessfully to pass a comprehensive smoke-free workplace law in Indiana to prevent more deaths. Tobacco companies are unrelenting in their desire to make millions of dollars at the cost of more than 10,000 Hoosier lives per year and more than \$2 billion in health-care expenses related to tobacco.

Yet the Senate Public Policy Committee refused to hear any amendments to strengthen the bill and rightfully voted down a watered-down version. Now, we see an 11th-hour attempt to defund and incapacitate one of the few agencies in the state that has made a documented difference in improving public health and reducing health-care costs. The Senate's proposal is not about balancing the budget, since the funds for ITPC are not tax dollars; they are from the 1990s tobacco settlement fund from which Indiana receives \$125 million per year.

The Senate proposal not only leaves Indiana's tobacco prevention efforts severely underfunded, but it sets back tobacco prevention and cessation efforts indefinitely by abolishing ITPC's independent, volunteer, expert executive board. Instead of an independent board charting the course of this very successful program, committee members propose a bureaucratic solution that could cause the tobacco prevention program to fail.

Such a failure would mean a rollback in Indiana's progress on tobacco prevention during the past 10 years, causing a negative impact on the health of Hoosiers. This move is about shutting down efforts to effectively battle against the scourge of tobacco in Indiana. Such a move is unacceptable.

We call on the members of the General Assembly to reverse this committee's proposal and revert back to Gov. Mitch Daniels' budget: a \$9.23 million budget for an independent, research-based ITPC. The ITPC has worked successfully with faith and health volunteers and other community leaders and members across the state in order to combat the use of tobacco in Indiana. Their important work must continue.

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Governor introduces plan for a healthier Indiana by raising cigarette tax at least 25 cents a pack

INDIANAPOLIS - Governor Mitch Daniels proposed on Nov. 17 a simple yet innovative health plan that would provide health insurance coverage for more than 100,000 Hoosiers, reduce smoking rates - especially among kids - and immunize more Indiana children. The health initiatives would be funded by an increase in the state's cigarette tax.

Support for the plan already has been expressed by a number of organizations, including the Indiana State Medical Association, the Indiana Minority Health Coalition, Methodist Hospitals (Gary and Merrillville), Clarian Health, the Indiana Tobacco and Cessation Prevention Executive Board and the Hoosier Faith and Health Coalition, where more than 70 United Methodist congregations participate to eliminate tobacco from Indiana. U.S. Secretary of the Health and Human Services Michael Leavitt also applauded the governor's idea.

The Governor's Plan for a Healthier Indiana would lead to:

- Protection of children from the dangers of smoking and other diseases,
- Preventive care for more Hoosiers,
- Peace of mind for thousands of Hoosiers who currently have no health insurance and
- Personal responsibility to take control of health care decisions

"Indiana can't be a healthy state with the second highest rate of smoking in the country, and we can't lower our smoking rate when we sell some of the cheapest cigarettes in America," said Daniels.

Specifically, the governor has proposed a plan that would:

- Initiate an aggressive smoking cessation and reduction campaign, aimed especially at reducing the number of kids who smoke. The plan would provide \$24 million more annually to the Indiana Tobacco and Prevention Cessation Trust Fund (IPTC) for local tobacco cessation and reduction programs. This amount, plus the current budget of \$11 million, would bring IPTC funding to the level recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.

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- Assure that children are fully immunized by age 2 with \$11 million to expand access to vaccinations.
- Establish a program that offers health insurance to 100,000 or more low-income Hoosiers.

Funded by increase in cigarette tax

The plan would be funded by an increase in the state's cigarette tax - which is currently 55« cents per pack and the 36th lowest rate in the country - and a variety of federal funds. The governor suggested an increase of at least 25 cents, but will ask the legislature to determine the precise amount. The number of uninsured who could receive coverage would go up dependent upon the size of the cigarette tax increase. With a 25-cent increase, it is estimated up to 120,000 people could receive coverage. With a 50-cent increase, about 200,000 could receive coverage.

"We've balanced the budget already through spending reductions and no tax increases. That will continue to be our approach," said Daniels. "Any new proceeds should go to promote the health of Hoosiers and for no other purpose."

The governor's three-part health insurance coverage plan would help Hoosiers who least can afford coverage. It would be available to those who earn less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level and who are without employer-sponsored health insurance.

"Every day, Hoosiers all across Indiana are worried about how a health event they are not prepared to deal with financially could turn their lives upside down," said Daniels. "This plan is a start to give many more people protection and peace of mind while fostering more personal responsibility to make good decisions."

An estimated 14.3 percent of Indiana's population, more than 550,000 individuals, currently has no health insurance, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics.

Where the money will come from

To provide coverage to 120,000 Hoosiers, the total cost would be about \$480 million, and would be paid with these funds: \$95 million of cigarette tax proceeds, \$80 million of individual contributions, \$50 million from the Disproportionate Share Hospital Program (DSH) and \$255 million in expected federal funds.

If the cost of cigarettes was raised by 50 cents per pack, coverage could provide to about 200,000 people using \$172 million from cigarette tax revenue; \$132 million from individual contributions, \$50 million DSH and \$446 million in expected federal funds.

If the plan receives approval by the General Assembly, the proposed effective date would be January 1, 2008.

Daniels announced that this plan will be introduced into the Indiana State Senate by Senator Patricia Miller of Indianapolis. She is a member of Old Bethel United Methodist Church.

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Hoosier Faith and Health Coalition

More than 70 United Methodist congregations statewide have already signed a Hoosier Faith and Health Coalition (HFHC) petition calling for a 50-cent increase in the cigarette tax, full funding of ITPC and support of local ordinances banning smoking from workplaces such as restaurants.

Earlier this year, the North Indiana Conference meeting at Lafayette in June approved the HF&HC resolution but edited out the increase in cigarette taxes.

HFHC has more than 400 participating congregations across Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith groups and will probably push for a dollar increase in the cigarette tax. The higher the tax, the more lower-income Hoosiers will benefit.

A copy of the Hoosier Faith and Health Coalition Resolution to be signed by your congregation can be found on the Indiana Area UMC Web site at www.inareaumc.org. Click on "Join the Indiana Anti-smoking Campaign."

Leaders of faith communities, both pastors and laity, are invited to a complimentary Show Your Faith for Healthy Kids Luncheon on Wednesday, Jan. 24 beginning at Noon at Christ Church Cathedral on Monument Circle in Indianapolis. Space is limited. For reservations call 317-472-1055.

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Maria Luisa Tishner, ILI Program Director, delivers a presentation on the dangers of tobacco to parishioners of Vida Nueva United Methodist Church.

Resources

We highly recommend reading "The DeMarco Factor: Transforming Public Will into Political Power" by Michael Pertschuk.

Note that the following resources have been included in this Promising Practice to be utilized as examples and adjusted for specific needs:

Hoosier Faith and Health Coalition Smoking Reduction Resolution form (see page 7).

"Faith leaders defend anti-smoking agency" (article published in The Indianapolis Star, see page 8).

"Governor introduces plan for a healthier Indiana by raising cigarette tax at least 25 cents a pack" (press release, see pages 9-11).

The National Latino Tobacco Control Network (NLTCN) www.latinotobaccocontrol.org is an open information and support system for tobacco control and health disparities advocates and experts who want to become more effective in changing policies and social norms around tobacco control through exchange of information and personal and institutional linkages. NLTCN is a member of the National Tobacco Prevention Networks www.tobaccoopreventionnetworks.org.

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