

Communities Putting Prevention to Work



RINGGOLD COUNTY, IOWA
Tobacco Use Prevention

Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) is an initiative designed to make healthy living easier by promoting environmental changes at the local level. Through funding awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2010, a total of 50 communities are working to prevent obesity and tobacco use—the two leading preventable causes of death and disability.

“THE PARK IS A CENTRAL PART OF OUR COMMUNITY AND WE WANT PEOPLE TO HAVE THE BEST POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE HERE. CIGARETTE SMOKE AND TOBACCO LITTER ARE NOT PART OF A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT.”

— Don Solliday, Mayor, Mount Ayr

Community Overview

Ringgold County, Iowa, is tackling tobacco use throughout the community. In Ringgold County, approximately 8% of adults are current smokers. Further, approximately 40% of 11th grade students report having smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days. Tobacco use during pregnancy is a particular challenge, as Ringgold ranks 15th highest of 99 counties in Iowa for mothers who smoke during pregnancy.



A small rural community of fewer than 5,131 residents, Ringgold County is one of the poorest counties in Iowa. Approximately 12% of the total population lives under the Federal poverty level. Iowa adults living at or under the Federal poverty level are nearly twice as likely to be current smokers compared to adults at higher income levels. While Ringgold County is pursuing tobacco-use prevention efforts aimed at all community members, certain initiatives target high-risk groups, including low-income and youth populations.

Community Successes

If healthy options are not available, then healthy living is not possible. With the support of the CPPW initiative, Ringgold County has implemented a variety of changes throughout the community to make healthy living easier.

To decrease tobacco use, Ringgold County:

- Developed a hard-hitting public awareness initiative targeting women of reproductive age to encourage tobacco cessation. The campaign reached approximately 70% of county members through billboards, posters, social media, and newspaper and radio advertisements.
- Provided quitline referrals and free tobacco cessation kits and counseling to all members of the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) who were identified as tobacco users.





“DO YOU WANT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN TO LEAVE THE PARK BECAUSE SOMEONE IS SMOKING OR CHEWING THERE? OR WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE THE TOBACCO PRODUCTS LEAVE THE PARK?”

— *Marci, Ringgold County resident*

Community Successes *(continued)*

- Adopted a tobacco-free park policy on March 21, 2011. This decision was based on survey results suggesting that nearly 70% of Ringgold County citizens supported tobacco-free parks.

(The list above is a sample of all activities completed by the community.)

Health Care Providers Encourage Tobacco Cessation

Ringgold County is collaborating with health care providers to encourage tobacco cessation among patients who are identified as tobacco users. Health care professionals were provided a Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence training that highlighted how to address tobacco cessation with patients, conduct motivational interviews, and move patients to the next stage of the continuum to quit tobacco. As a result of the training, 47% of all quitline referrals came directly from health care providers during the first half of 2011. By encouraging health care providers to refer patients to the state's quitline, Ringgold County has already reached 19% of the tobacco users in the community with tobacco cessation messages.

Leadership Team

The leadership team includes high-level community leaders from multiple sectors, who have the combined resources and capacity to make healthy living easier. Members of Ringgold County's leadership team are key agents for change in their community. The leadership team includes representatives from the following organizations:

- American Cancer Society, Midwest Division
- Chamber of Commerce
- City of Kellerton
- City of Mount Ayr
- Clearview Nursing Home
- Diagonal Community School District
- Iowa State University Extension
- Matura Action Corporation
- Mount Ayr Community School District Board
- Ringgold County Board of Health
- Ringgold County Board of Supervisors
- Ringgold County Hospital
- Ringgold County Public Health
- Sites for Learning Afterschool Program
- Support Our Schools—Mount Ayr CSD Parent Association

Additional Information

For more information, please visit www.idph.state.ia.us.