



# Cross Sectoral Partnerships for Establishing a Tobacco Cessation Program

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## ABSTRACT

Addiction to tobacco products is of high concern for Washington County Public Health. Washington County:

- Had the 6<sup>th</sup> highest smoking rate in New York in 2022
- Lacks the resources of larger counties to tackle this issue, including a hospital, and the rural landscape limits access to pharmacies and primary care providers

We designed a program for tobacco cessation based upon information discovered by evaluating community needs to determine program appropriateness and allocation of resources. Commit 2 Quit is open to all Washington County residents, age 18 and over, and provides participants with services and education to support them in quitting tobacco. Our aim is this program will decrease the smoking rate in Washington County over the next decade.



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Evaluate community needs to determine program appropriateness and allocation of resources.
- Engage with community health partners to affirm program suitability.
- Design a program for tobacco cessation based upon information discovered when assessing community needs.

## METHODS

Social determinants of health (SODH) greatly affect Washington County residents in their ability to access resources. Washington County has a far higher ratio of people to providers for primary care, mental health care and dentists than neighboring counties (Figure 1)<sup>2</sup>.

- Makes it harder for residents to access providers that educate patients about the risks tobacco usage has on their health and support them in their attempt to quit tobacco products.

## METHODS (cont.)

In 2021, only 20.6% of Washington County residents had a bachelor's degree compared to 42.7% in Saratoga County, 33.1% in Warren County, and 34.3% in Rensselaer County<sup>2</sup>.

- Those with a bachelor's degree are far less likely to start smoking and if they did smoke, they were more likely to be interested in quitting and are more successful at quitting<sup>4</sup>.

The poverty rate in Washington County was 12.3% compared to 7.7% in Saratoga County and 10.2% in Warren County<sup>3</sup>.

Washington County has a 31.6% ALICE (Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed) rate, with some communities, such as Whitehall and Putnam having a rate of over 50%<sup>1</sup>.

- Attempting to quit smoking can be expensive, especially if a person does not have health insurance.
- Per the Affordable Care Act, most health insurance providers are required to cover 4 sessions of counseling, 90 days of smoking cessation medications, and 2 quit attempts per year<sup>5</sup>.

To combat the challenges SODH pose, a cross-sectional approach was taken.

- In January 2023 Health Educator Liz St. John and NYSPHC Fellow Autumn Headwell met with Glens Falls Hospital's Cancer Prevention Promotion Center to work together to develop a tobacco cessation program that would match community needs and were trained by the Rutgers School of Biomedical and Health Sciences as Certified Tobacco Treatment Providers.
- In March and April, Headwell designed and conducted a community survey. It was conducted online via Facebook and at Comfort Food Community Food Pantry in Greenwich, NY and the Whitehall Food Pantry in Whitehall, NY.
- In April and May, Headwell designed and developed curriculum for both individualized and group counseling, using materials from Rutgers University's Center for Tobacco Studies, Maine Health's Center for Tobacco Independence, San Francisco's Stop Smoking Program, and St Peter's Health Partner's The Butt Stops Here and with the advice of University of Vermont's Center on Rural Addiction.

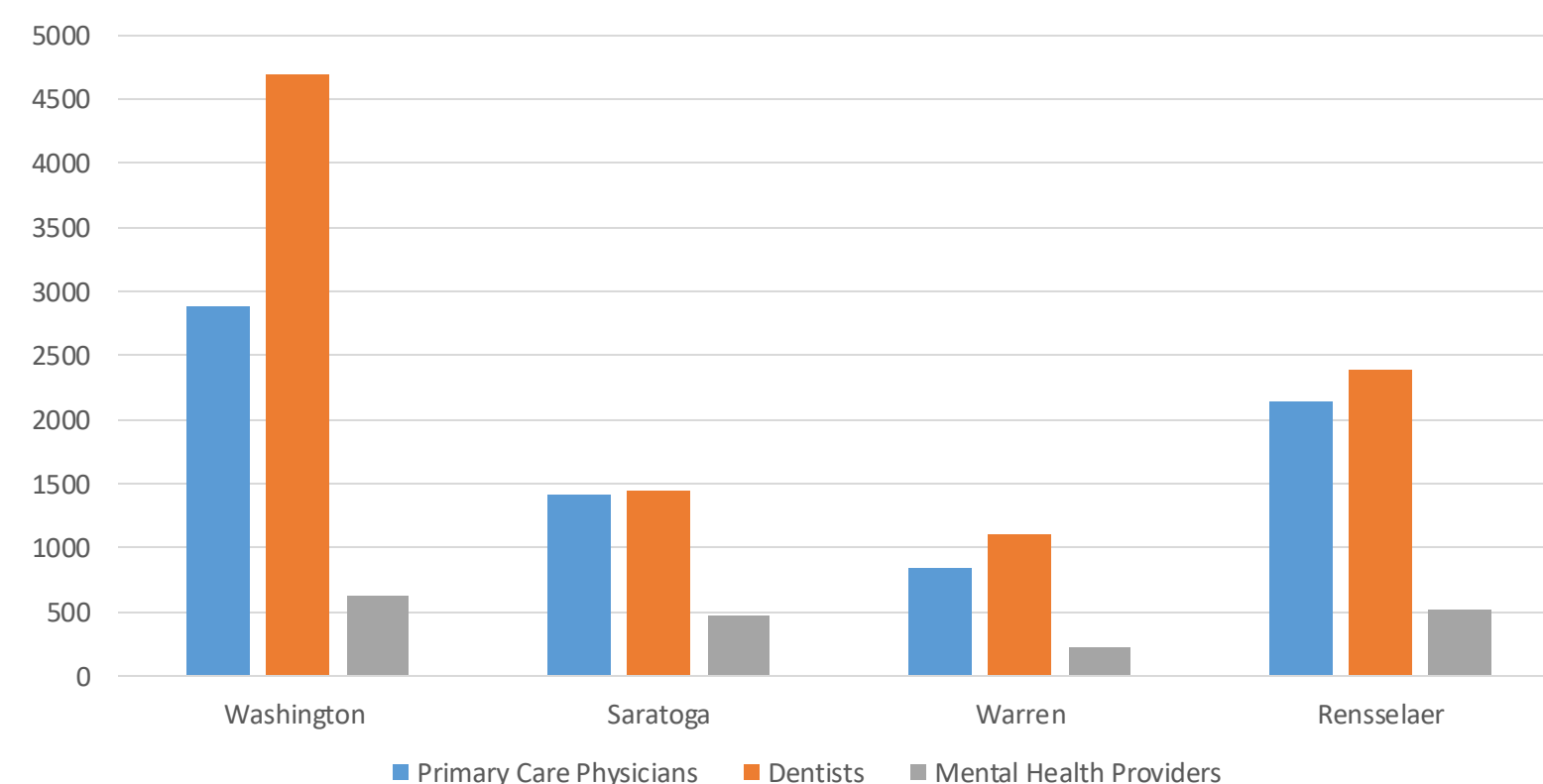


Figure 1: Number of people per provider for primary care physicians, dentists, and mental health providers in Washington, Saratoga, Warren, and Rensselaer Counties



## RESULTS

In June 2023, Washington County Public Health, in conjunction with North County Nicotine Consultants, launched their tobacco cessation program, Commit 2 Quit. Commit 2 Quit will:

- Help residents stop using tobacco products such as cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, and e-cigarettes.
- Provide participants with the necessary education, tools, and support they need to quit tobacco products.
- Host individual and group coaching for residents free of charge.

## RESULTS (cont.)

To spread awareness of the program we:

- Tabled the Canal Street Marketplace in Fort Edward, Hudson Falls Community Nights, and at open houses at schools across the county
- Displayed posters at 59 stores, food pantries, libraries, town halls, etc. across the county
- Created a display for Washington County Fair
- Presented a program overview in four communities
- Published 25 Facebook posts about program

## CONCLUSION

Utilizing existing and new connections allowed Washington County Public Health to develop a tobacco cessation program that is suited to the needs of its residents. By taking a cross-sectional approach and examining the SODH that affect our communities, we can ensure that limitations will not prevent those who wish quit tobacco products from accomplishing their goal. We developed Commit 2 Quit which aims to help Washington County residents quit tobacco products. Despite being widely advertised, we have struggled with community participation.

## REFERENCES

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