



## OTRU's Evaluation Guidance and Support Project

Welcome to the second newsletter from OTRU's Evaluation Support Team! OTRU's Evaluation Support Team continues to respond to the knowledge needs, evaluation and research requests from Ontario's Public Health Units (PHUs), Tobacco Control Area Networks (TCANs), and other tobacco Transfer Payment Agencies (TPAs). We are excited to be sharing information about our activities and progress this year.

### Volume and Type of Evaluation Support Requests

Since April 1st, 2013, OTRU has received 52 requests from our partners across all three pillars in tobacco control. Forty-seven requests have been from TCANs or PHUs and five requests have come from other stakeholders (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Evaluation Support Requests by Geographical Location**

TCAN	PHU	# of Requests
South West	Windsor-Essex	2
	Middlesex-London	1
	TCAN wide	2
Central West	City of Hamilton	1
	Waterloo	1
	Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph	1
	TCAN wide	2
Central East	Peterborough	2
	York	1
	TCAN wide	4
Toronto	Toronto	5
East	Ottawa	2
	TCAN Wide	4
North East	Algoma	4
	Porcupine	1
	Timiskaming	4
	TCAN wide	4
North West	Thunder Bay	5
All TCANs		1
Other Organizations		5



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The Evaluation Support team classifies requests by their complexity and the amount of time taken to complete them:

- Brief: requests can usually be completed within the week that they are assigned
- Moderate: requests can take up to three weeks to complete
- Intensive: requests can take a month or more to complete

Since April 1st, 2013, we have received 26 brief requests, 19 moderate requests and 7 intensive requests. Below we provide summaries of selected intensive and moderate-level requests that have recently been addressed by the Evaluation Support Team.

## Strategies Affecting Tobacco Vendor Compliance with Youth Access Laws: A Review of the Literature

Upon request from the Central West TCAN, OTRU conducted a review of academic and grey literature to identify the factors that are associated with vendor compliance, and to explore the strategies and practices that positively affect compliance with youth access legislation.

Various factors are associated with successful purchase of tobacco by or its sale to minors, most commonly:

- Characteristics of the purchaser (older age, female, and lying about one's age)
- Characteristics of the retail clerk (younger age, male, and not asking for identification)
- Time and day of the compliance check
- Later hours of retail operation

It is evident that legislation preventing the sale of tobacco to minors is necessary but not sufficient to achieve high and consistent compliance among tobacco retailers. A comprehensive strategy is needed to improve tobacco vendor compliance with youth access laws: components of a strategy to address compliance include the combination of active enforcement with effective education and community involvement.

Education initiatives must:

- Inform retailers about the law and penalties for violations
- Provide effective ways to ask for identification
- Verify the authenticity of identification and age of the purchaser
- Strategies to refuse tobacco sales to minors



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While mass media initiatives should be used to engage the community, the specific goals and messaging need to be appropriate to the local environment. Since the effects of interventions diminish over time, it is imperative to have continued and sustained efforts.

To access the full report, please go to: [http://otru.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/special\\_vendor\\_compliance.pdf](http://otru.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/special_vendor_compliance.pdf)

## Tobacco Cessation Practices and Services in Central West Ontario: Environmental Scan Survey Results

OTRU supported the Central West TCAN in conducting an environmental scan to explore the current state of tobacco cessation practices and services across public health and health care organizations in the region. The survey was conducted from June 19 to July 31, 2013. A total of 82 of the 113 eligible organizations who are members of local Communities of Practice completed the survey resulting in a 72.6% response rate.

Public health and health care organizations appear to be taking steps toward building their capacity in smoking cessation and integrating evidence-based cessation approaches, such as the 5As (Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist, Arrange), into daily practice.

Most organizations have:

- Appointed a designated staff lead for smoking cessation (82%)
- Allocated various healthcare providers - nurses (62%), physicians (56%), nurse practitioners (45%), pharmacists (37%), addiction counselors (30%) and others - to deliver tobacco cessation services
- Obtained support from senior management (83%)
- Secured funding and other resources for smoking cessation (88%)
- Integrated the standardized Ask question into the documentation system (83%)

Most of these practice changes were also identified by the organizations as key factors that have contributed to the provision of cessation services to tobacco users.

Little progress was reported in other aspects of capacity building and integration of the 5As approach into daily practice. More than half of the organizations (56%) reported that a few of their staff received training in tobacco cessation, indicating a need to increase healthcare providers' access to training opportunities.



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Many organizations have not yet:

- Adopted a formal 5As tobacco cessation intervention policy (55%)
- Integrated the standardized Advise (50%) and Assess (41%) questions into admission/intake protocols
- Introduced a chart reminder system (46%)
- Developed evaluation processes and performance metrics (45%)

The lack of progress may be explained in part by limited organizational resources, such as lack of staff and staff time for smoking cessation. These factors were identified as key barriers to implementing and sustaining the 5As tobacco cessation services. Based on the environmental scan findings, efforts should focus on addressing these barriers in order to facilitate system-level/organizational changes and adoption of evidence-based tobacco cessation treatments by healthcare providers.

For more information about this environmental scan, download the PDF report at [http://otru.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/CW\\_TCAN\\_survey\\_results\\_final.pdf](http://otru.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/CW_TCAN_survey_results_final.pdf).

## Why You Puffin? Participatory Research Initiative

In July 2013, OTRU was approached by the Toronto Public Health Unit to support the Toronto Queer and Trans Youth Participatory Research Initiative for Tobacco Use Prevention – Why You Puffin? program. The LGBTQ community has a higher smoking rate than the general Canadian population, yet little is known about smoking behavior and quitting experience of the LGBTQ youth. By engaging youth members of the Toronto area LGBTQ community in participatory research, the program aimed to examine the smoking experience of the LGBTQ youth and identify potential services to help prevent, quit or reduce smoking.

OTRU's support for the program involved:

- Conducting a focus group with peer researchers
- Undertaking qualitative data analysis
- Preparing a report

Peer researchers identified various reasons as to why smoking is common in LGBTQ communities, including:

- Use of smoking as a coping mechanism
- Peer pressure
- An ice breaker in social settings
- The tobacco industry influence



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Peer researchers thought that Why You Puffin? was a successful program. Achievements for the peer researchers included:

- Their personal transformation (e.g. became more open-minded and empathetic as a result of the program)
- The program impact on their awareness of and relationship with smoking
- Increased ability to give back to their community

Peer researchers reported facing challenges related to the structure of the program, maintenance of motivation, focus on the monetary incentive by some members, and the lack of a LGBTQ leader and program accessibility.

They provided suggestions for further improvement of the program, such as:

- Holding the group program in a safe space
- Having the program run by a member of the LGBTQ community
- Tailoring self-help materials
- Providing low cost nicotine replacement therapies

For more information about the project, please contact Janvere Lyder, Health Promotion Consultant, Toronto Public Health at 416-338-8478 or <mailto:jlyder@toronto.ca>.

## Looking for Help?

Please complete our [online Evaluation Request Form](#)

OR contact:



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