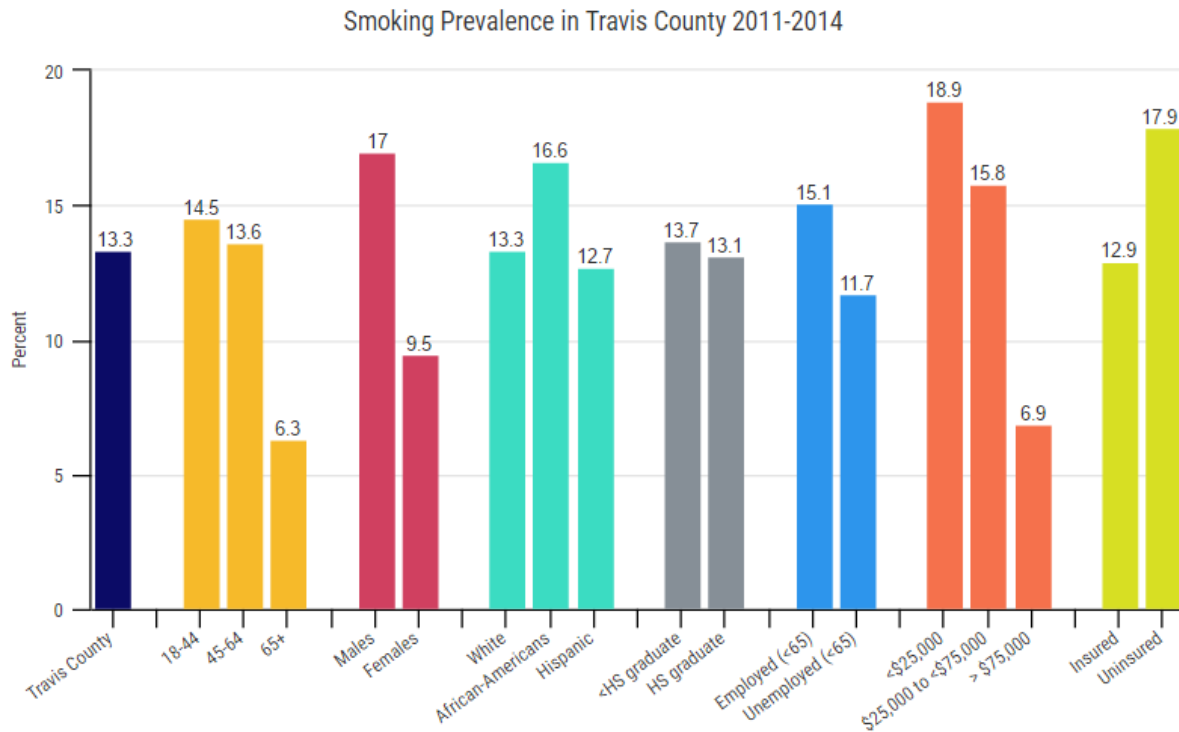




Young Adults and Smoking: Getting to “QUIT”

Background

From 2011-2014, the smoking prevalence in Austin/Travis County among adults 18 and older was 13.3% (Data source: Texas Department of State Health Services BRFSS 2011-2014).



Disparities exist in smoking prevalence including:

- The highest prevalence of smoking is among adults 18-44 years of age.
- Higher prevalence of smoking exists among adults without a high school diploma, employed adults, low income adults, and uninsured adults.
- A higher percent of males are current smokers than females.

Intervention

To address these disparities, Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Department was approved for an 1115 Waiver Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) project to enhance tobacco prevention and control efforts among young adults of lower socioeconomic status. Implementation began in 2013. The intervention focused on a targeted media campaign for 18-24 year olds which promoted living a tobacco free lifestyle and accessing SmokeFreeTXT, a free text message smoking cessation program from the National Cancer Institute. Media platforms and messaging were refined in each demonstration year, and ongoing Plan Do Study Act cycles assessed how media and

outreach efforts impacted SmokeFreeTXT enrollment. Multiple media platforms were utilized in this project including radio, cable television, Facebook, YouTube, mobile display ads, events, and outreach.

Lessons Learned



Engaging the 18-24 year old population in smoking cessation efforts continues to be challenging. Focus groups during the campaign reaffirmed that young adults often feel they can quit smoking on their own, or “cold turkey”, without support services. They are reluctant to seek help for quitting smoking.



Direct outreach by brand ambassadors in areas frequented by young adults, such as 6th Street, appears to be an effective method of promoting utilization of SmokeFreeTXT.



Radio advertisements utilizing testimonials by popular on-air personalities (DJs) also appears to be effective in influencing smokers to access cessation services.



Cable television advertisements using testimonials of young adults affected by smoking demonstrated increases in SmokeFreeTXT enrollment across all age groups; however, the cost of these advertisements is higher.



Digital advertising appears to be less effective than other media platforms in increasing enrollment in SmokeFreeTXT among young adults.

This project will continue until October of 2017. Additional outreach and media strategies will be implemented during this final project year. Overall, the prevalence of smoking among 18-24 year olds in Travis County has decreased during the DSRIP project period from 14.9% (2011-2013 baseline) to 7.4% (2014).

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