Consequences of Threats of Loss of Funding for Statewide Tobacco Program Activities

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Background
- Funding for teen and young adult tobacco prevention and cessation programs rose from $3 million to $18 million annually from 2003-2010.
- The North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), was abolished effective June 30, 2011.
- Funding shifted in 2011 to the NC Department of Health and Human Services, but funding uncertainty and breaks in grant contracts resulted in employee loss and decreased program activities.
- Continued threats to program funding forced a shift in focus from policy adoption and programmatic activities to advocacy for program funding.
- Funding continues to decline for FY 2012-2013

Methods
- Quantitative data collected from between 2009 and 2012 fiscal years from 46 grantees:
  - Monthly activity reports (programmatic activities)
  - Semi-annual surveys (progress, barriers)
  - Qualitative data from two focus groups in 2012 (n=15)

Results

Progress Data from Semiannual Reports

Focus Group Results: Barriers to Sustainability Efforts

"Until funding was in jeopardy, I never…ever considered my job getting in touch with legislators and letting them know what we were -- my job was working with youth and teen tobacco prevention... the job has become advocating for the job."

"This past year…my action plan hasn’t even been looked at because everything that we had intended to do was put on hold because of reaching out to elected officials and trying to get them to save the program."

"We send stuff out, but we don’t get feedback back. So, we don’t know what’s working and what’s not."

"I think the biggest (barrier) is no response, just lack of acknowledgement even…you just wonder if they even see it..."

"It’s hard as a county employee to do some of the outreach to the elected officials. You have to be very careful what you do on work time, what you send out, how you send it out, to not cross that line between advocacy and lobbying."

Threats of loss of funding have measurable impacts

Conclusions

This work was funded by North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Independent Outcomes Evaluation of Tobacco Initiatives contract. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund Commission. Reviewed by the UNC Chapel Hill Public Health Nursing Institutional Review Board (# 10-1249).