

MaineHealth

Testimony of Kenneth I. Lewis
Director of the MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence
before the
Health and Human Services Committee to Study the Allocations
of the Fund for a Health Maine

Senator Brakey, Representative Gattine, and distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Kenneth I. Lewis, director of the MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence (CTI).

MaineHealth is comprised of 8 regional health care systems based in Biddeford, Portland, Norway, Farmington, Damariscotta, Rockport, Belfast, and North Conway, New Hampshire that provide access to comprehensive health care services for all in need, regardless of ability to pay, in 11 counties in southern and central Maine and one in New Hampshire. MaineHealth includes Maine Behavioral Healthcare, Home Health Visiting Nurses, NorDx and 1400 physicians in our PHO who provide excellent care to our patients. MaineHealth's members employ over 17,000 people who are responsible for providing the high quality of care that has earned our member organizations a number of national awards, including recognition from NCQA and Leapfrog. Our vision is "Working Together So Our Communities are the Healthiest in America."

The Center for Tobacco Independence advances that vision by providing evidence based nicotine dependence and smoking cessation counseling, provider education and training, and health systems consultation to ensure all Mainers have access to evidence based tobacco treatment services. MaineHealth CTI has been awarded the contract to manage the statewide tobacco treatment initiative since February of 2001. The Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) partnership with Tobacco Free Maine is responsible for the administration of the contract and oversight of the statewide tobacco treatment initiative. The contract covers technical services, management, and some evaluation. MaineHealth has been awarded this grant as part of a complete RFP process in fiscal years 2002, 2005, 2011 and 2015.

The goal of the partnership with Tobacco Free Maine is to provide access to affordable and comprehensive tobacco treatment services through the development of the following four components:

1. Coordination of the statewide system of tobacco dependence treatment services consisting of several interrelated components to ensure access to effective, evidence based treatment services for all tobacco users across the State.

2. The statewide toll free Maine Tobacco Helpline exists as a statewide no charge, convenient, telephone based resource. It provides tobacco users with screening, counseling, support materials and referrals for intensive tobacco treatment. It also provides comprehensive follow up counseling and support for Maine tobacco users for ways quit based on public health service guidelines for the treatment of tobacco use and nicotine dependence.
3. Statewide tobacco dependence treatment training. This component addresses the need for qualified tobacco treatment specialists at the state, regional and local level. The Center for Tobacco Independence provides training to providers across the state on evidence based tobacco treatment services ranging from brief to intensive interventions. Training includes six basic skills training events across the state, two intensive treatments training events, a treatment conference and approximately 160 face-to-face provider office training sessions.
4. A medication program which ensures Maine tobacco users wishing to quit have access to select proven and effective nicotine replacement therapies which include over the counter medications.

Throughout its history, the MaineHealth Center for Tobacco Independence has provided over 230,000 telephonic counseling sessions to Maine residents. One thousand two-hundred and thirty nine tobacco users have been provided assistance with approximately 60% receiving nicotine replacement therapy support. In addition, about one-third of people using the Maine Tobacco Helpline are MaineCare beneficiaries.

I will conclude with one important distinction between tobacco use prevention and treatment. We represent a treatment program focused only on treating nicotine dependence and tobacco use.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments. I would be happy to answer questions.