

Evidence-based Guidelines: Evaluating Diffusion in State Tobacco Control Programs

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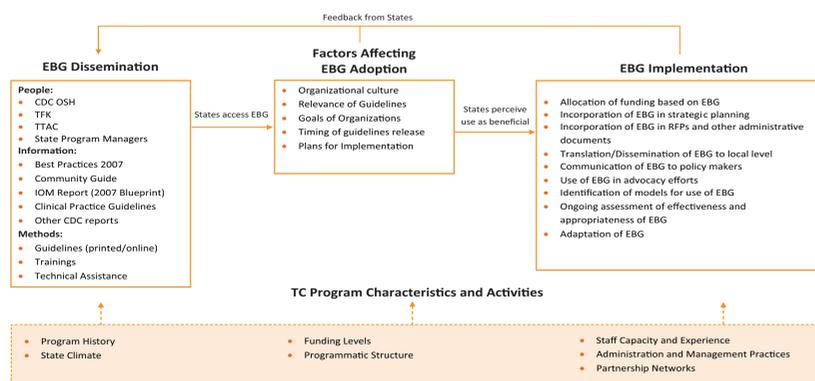
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Background

There has been a significant amount of research done on what works to curb tobacco use. Many agree that the evidence-base for tobacco control is one of the most developed in the field of public health. However, the advancement in the knowledge base is only effective if that information reaches those who work to reduce tobacco consumption. This project designed and conducted a process evaluation of states' usage of evidence-based guidelines (EBG). The evaluation focused on the dissemination and utilization of guidelines, including facilitating factors and challenges to implementing evidence-based practices. The project goals were two-fold:

1. Develop a plan to evaluate how states are using evidence-based guidelines; and
2. Conduct an evaluation of eight tobacco control programs and disseminate findings.

Evaluation Framework



Methods

- Conducted in-person interviews with eight tobacco control programs; followed up by phone interviews for partners who were not available during site visits.
 - An average of 22 partners were interviewed for each tobacco control program.
- Data were collected under the three main areas of the evaluation framework:

Dissemination

How did partners learn of evidence-based guidelines?

Which guidelines were they aware of?

Adoption

What factors played a role in decision-making for tobacco control?

How did organizational characteristics influence the adoption of guidelines?

Implementation

Which guidelines were critical for tobacco control professionals?

What resources were missing or needed to implement tobacco control activities?

- Findings were initially disseminated via individual state profiles to the CDC and evaluation participants.
 - Cross-state analyses and dissemination of findings are planned for the next year.

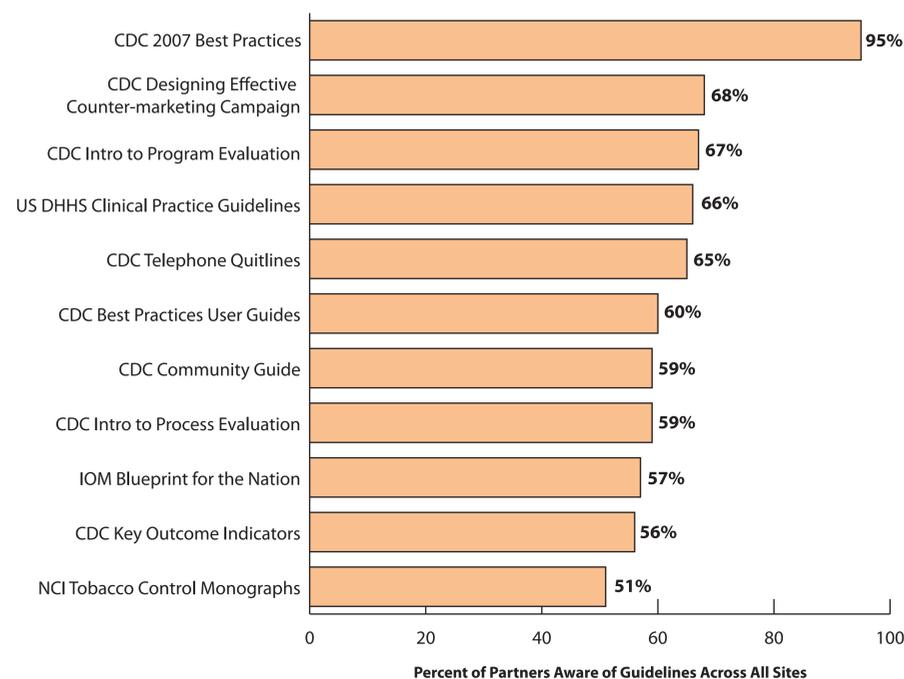
Highlights

Factors Taken into Consideration for Making Programmatic and Policy Decisions

Decision-Making Factor	Mean	Range Across States
Recommendations from evidence-based guidelines	2.4	1.7-3.5
Direction from inside the organization	3.5	3.2-4.2
Mandates or input from policymakers	3.7	2.4-4.9
Input from partners	3.9	3.5-4.3
Organizational capacity	3.9	3.2-4.7
Cost	4.1	3.3-4.7
Information obtained from trainings or conferences	6.1	5.4-6.7

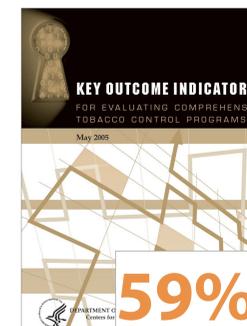
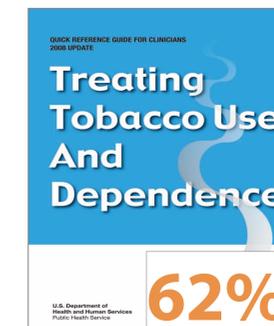
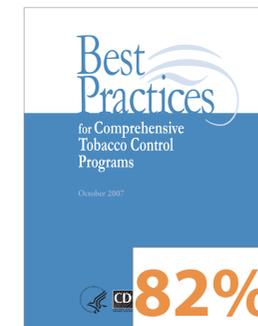
Partners were asked to rank the factors below on their importance from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important) when making decisions about their tobacco control efforts. The table below shows the order of importance of the factors and the range of rankings across states. Recommendations from evidence-based guidelines was seen as the most important decision-making factor across states. Mandates or input from policymakers showed the most variability across states.

Awareness of Evidence-based Guidelines



Partners were asked if they were aware of 12 guidelines relevant for state tobacco control programs. The CDC's *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs* was easily the most recognized guideline across states (95% of partners aware). This guideline was viewed as providing a framework for tobacco control programs. There was a significant drop in awareness after the top guideline.

Top Three Guidelines Identified as Critical



Percentage of partners who ranked guideline as critical

The 2007 *Best Practices* was seen as the most critical guideline for tobacco control partners across all states. This guideline was identified by many partners as the basis or foundation of their state tobacco control program and was commonly emphasized by lead agencies. There was a significant drop in percentage of partners who felt guidelines were critical after *Best Practices*. Partners felt these guidelines were important due to their usefulness for specific components of the tobacco control program.

Summary

- This evaluation provided a sense of which guidelines tobacco control professionals were aware of and thought of as critical to their work.
- There was a clear message across states that evidence-based guidelines were important and influenced their decision-making about tobacco control efforts.
- Partners were most aware of guidelines that provided a framework for their tobacco control work. These guidelines were also usually emphasized by the lead agency of the tobacco control programs and viewed as critical by tobacco control partners.
- A challenge for this evaluation, and the field of dissemination and implementation research, is determining how dissemination and awareness of evidence-based guidelines can lead to implementation of evidence-based practices.
 - The evaluation began to assess this in a few ways by asking partners about: influence of decision-making factors, facilitators and barriers to the use of guidelines, and specific activities they implemented to reduce the burden of tobacco use in their state.

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