



Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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Fifth Grade Spit Tobacco Education Program

In FY 1999-2000, Act 9 of the Wisconsin Statutes mandated that the Division of Public Health administer a youth smokeless tobacco cessation and prevention campaign. As a result, the Wisconsin Tobacco Control Board provided the Department of Health and Family Services, Division of Public Health, \$92,000 to contract the Wisconsin Dental Association to initiate the Fifth Grade Spit Tobacco Education Program. The program is implemented in partnership with the Milwaukee Brewers, the Department of Public Instruction, and Division of Public Health. The goals of the program are to increase awareness of health risks associated with spit tobacco and assist children in resisting social pressures to use spit tobacco. The program targets 80,000 children enrolled in 5th grade attending 1,242 public schools and 756 private schools and another 15,000 children who attend the Milwaukee Brewers' games. A comic book, explaining the dangers of spit tobacco and infusing positive health messages with language, math, science and geography learning activities, was created and published. A five-day classroom curriculum guide was also developed to accompany the comic book. Furthermore, the program implements a media campaign to increase awareness of the dangers of spit tobacco. During the first year of the program, curriculum guides and comic books were sent to all targeted schools, a game day was hosted by the Milwaukee Brewers to promote the program, and a stamp-designing/essay contest to raise student awareness of spit tobacco received entries from 65 towns. Evaluation of the curriculum in 2001 included a random sample of 112 students using a pre- and post-test. The tests showed that 42% of the students improved their knowledge scores after the program's spit tobacco curriculum was delivered; the results of attitude changes were similar. The pre-test evaluation also showed that a majority of the students had adequate knowledge of the adverse effects of spit tobacco use and that the curriculum could provide additional information for these children. Their teachers also endorsed the program. The program will be further developed and evaluated in its second year.

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