Center for Public Health Systems Science

GEORGE WARREN BROWN
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Bridging the gap between research and implementation: Disseminating the Tobacco Control Guides series
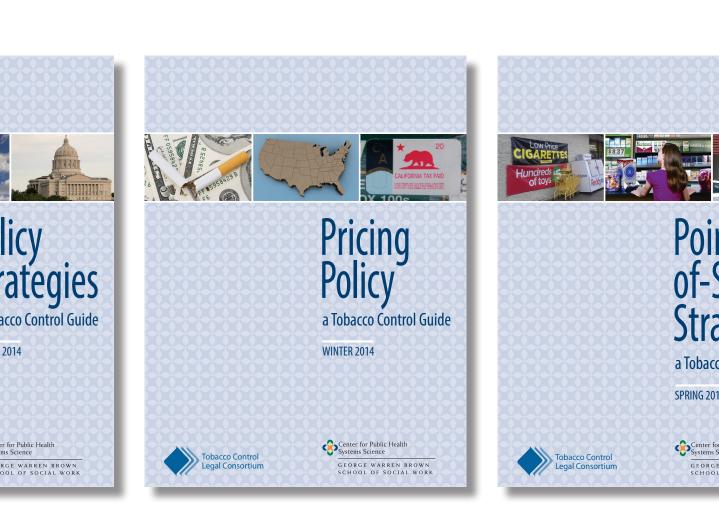
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BACKGROUND & APPROACH

The Tobacco Control Guides Series

In 2014, the Center for Public Health Systems Science at the Washington University in St. Louis published a series of Tobacco Control Guides.[1] The guides aim to bridge the gap between research and implementation by offering practical guidance on selecting and implementing evidence-based tobacco control policy strategies. Guide topics include *Policy Strategies*, *Pricing Policy*, and *Point-of-Sale Strategies*.

The guides were developed through a three-phase process:

- Literature review to determine the breadth and depth of evidence, identify best practices, and identify gaps in implementation guidance;
- Consultation with experts to determine content direction, gather insight on practical and political aspects of the topic, and identify potential case studies; and
- External review to gather user and expert feedback on key issues.

Dissemination Planning Tool

The dissemination of the Tobacco Control Guides is described using a six-part dissemination framework developed for patient safety research by the Association for Healthcare Research and Quality. The evidence-based tool draws from a review of dissemination theories, expert input from dissemination and health research fields, and pilot testing with health researchers. The tool guides researchers through six steps to build a dissemination plan, illustrated in the figure below:

Define the Product → Identify End Users → Work With Partners → Use Multiple Methods → Evaluate Success → Create a Work Plan

1   Funding for the publication of the Tobacco Control Guides series was provided by the Tobacco Control Legal Consortium, a program of the Public Health Law Center in St. Paul, Minnesota.

SIX-STEP DISSEMINATION PROCESS

Define the Product	Identify End Users	Work with Partners	Use Multiple Methods	Evaluate Success	Create a Work Plan
Define unique features: - Evidence-based - Practical - Readable - Modular **Highlight key uses:** - Address research and implementation gap - Select and implement evidence-based strategies - Gain support for tobacco control efforts - Share information - Plan future research	**Identify end users:** - State tobacco control programs - Advocacy groups - Foundations **Make a plan to engage them:** - Use new dissemination methods - Link release to current events in tobacco control	**Work with partners who:** - Are viewed as credible experts by end users - Communicate directly with end users - Reach a variety of audiences inside and outside tobacco control	**Choose dissemination methods to raise awareness:** - Print and online versions - Email announcement - News story - Tobacco control and public health listservs - Radio interview - Twitter posts **Choose dissemination methods to motivate action:** - Professional conferences - National tobacco control conference calls - Webinars	**Define measures of success:** *Reach* - Number disseminated via print, email, and e-newsletters - Requests for reprints - Opens and clicks from email announcement - Web analytics - Social media mentions *Use* - User feedback - Survey of all 50 state tobacco control programs	**Develop a work plan:** - Action items - Timeline - Budget - Resources **Refine dissemination process:** - Identify action steps - Reveal gaps in project resources and staff skills - Prioritize essential activities

DISSEMINATION RESULTS

Mass Diffusion to Generate Awareness

- **295** printed guides to all 50 states and national partners
- **500** reprints by the Minnesota Health Department
- **548** email announcements sent
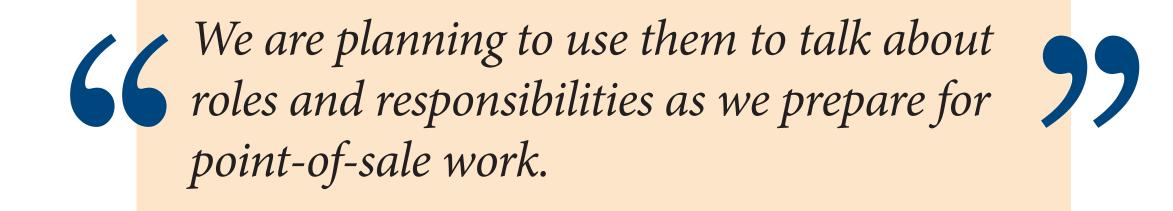- **37%** of email recipients clicked links to Guides
- **12** unique mentions in national special interest listservs
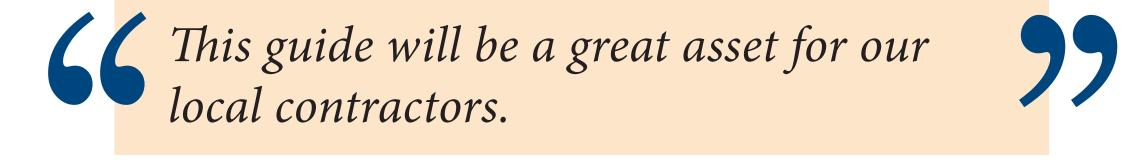- **750** pageviews of news stories about Tobacco Control Guides
- **10K** touches through Tobacco Control Legal Consortium Bulletins

Targeted Dissemination to Motivate Action

- **8** professional conferences targeting:
  - General public health practitioners and researchers
  - Tobacco control practitioners and researchers
  - Public health practitioners focused on disparities
- **2** CDC-sponsored national tobacco control conference calls
- **1** CDC-sponsored point-of-sale webinar with national partners

What Practitioners are Saying

> *We are planning to use them to talk about roles and responsibilities as we prepare for point-of-sale work.*

> *This guide will be a great asset for our local contractors.*

> *This will be a nice resource for us to draw upon for a new RFP we will be releasing.*

LESSONS LEARNED

The dissemination of the Tobacco Control Guides offers several lessons for researchers seeking better ways to translate and disseminate research on policy strategies to practitioners. Public health researchers can enhance dissemination efforts by:

- **Explaining the value of the research for practitioners**

  Practitioners often have less expertise and time to spend interpreting research. Identifying the practical implications of research can guide decisions about what findings to share and how to disseminate them.

- **Leveraging partnerships for dissemination**

  Partnerships enhance dissemination efforts by opening new communication channels not accessible to researchers.

- **Tying dissemination of research to an important national news story**

  Tying dissemination messages to current events illustrates the timeliness and relevance of research products and helps reach a wider audience.

- **Using a dissemination planning tool to develop a dissemination plan**

  Using an evidence-based dissemination planning tool can identify new dissemination approaches and ensure existing opportunities are not missed.

- **Developing a specific plan to reach local practitioners**

  Dissemination focused mainly on state tobacco control managers, yet local practitioners are often the ones implementing public health policies. Working with partners to reach this audience could increase uptake of policy research.

Next Steps

A 2014 survey by the National Cancer Institute and the State and Community Tobacco Control Research Initiative asked how often state tobacco control managers used the *Point-of-Sale Strategies* Guide. Over 80% of managers said their staff used the guide at least occasionally, and over 40% said they used it frequently. The survey is being conducted again in 2015. Continuing to track use of the Tobacco Control Guides will help improve future dissemination efforts.

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