



Connecticut Tobacco Control Program

State & Community Intervention Programs Snapshot Report

Prepared for:
Connecticut Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Program



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Introduction

This Snapshot Report summarizes activities conducted by EdAdvance and Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU), two non-profit agencies funded by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) Tobacco Control Program. The agencies were charged with implementing tobacco prevention and control interventions focused on the state and community level. Agencies chose program activities grounded in best practices for comprehensive tobacco control programs as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which are designed to prevent initiation of tobacco use among youth and young adults and reduce the overall prevalence of tobacco use in Connecticut.

Data for this Snapshot Report were compiled by the Tobacco Prevention and Evaluation Program (TPEP) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Specific focus areas of activities conducted by the agencies included: preventing initiation, promoting quitting, eliminating secondhand smoke, and eliminating disparities.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, both agencies reported challenges comprising hindered recruitment and scheduling of in-person meetings with students and staff in targeted public schools and colleges. These challenges often resulted in cancellations and the inability to carry out activities as initially planned. However, despite the challenges, both agencies accomplished multiple activities aimed at reaching their targeted audiences.

EdAdvance program staff expressed initial difficulty in recruiting members for the clubs. Challenges included scheduling club meetings at convenient times for all members resulting in no Club meetings being held early in the reporting period. Although subsequent meetings were scheduled, due to COVID-19 closures, all events, programs, and club meetings were cancelled, and no meetings were reported during the January to March 2020 reporting period.

SCSU staff reported several challenges to overcome during the grant period, including a primary challenge of not being able to hold in-person events due to the coronavirus pandemic. With the rapid spread of COVID-19, many events and activities were canceled and postponed. As schools focused on the challenges of transitioning to remote learning, ENDS was not their priority. Thus, the Tobacco Program Coordinator worked on other initiatives with plans to resume when the virus is contained. An additional challenge was limitations on rescheduling the conference without knowledge of when large groups would be permitted to assemble. To overcome this challenge, SCSU staff offered virtual meetings. However, this solution was not ideal for all participants, due to technological disruptions which prevented smooth communications.

EdAdvance Snapshot

EdAdvance program intervention activities included assistance with recruitment in Tobacco Free Clubs in 5 public schools, in addition to provision of technical assistance for planning and establishment of tobacco-free policies among local advisory councils and community-based organizations. Data reported by EdAdvance in the DPH Reporting Spreadsheet, from August through September of 2019, were compiled for this Snapshot Report by the Tobacco Prevention and Evaluation Program (TPEP) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Data from the Tobacco Free Report for January through March of 2020 were not included in this report, since no activities were reported for this period due to COVID-19-related postponements and cancellations in public schools.

Quantitative Outcomes: Data reported for EdAdvance reflect combined outcomes from their Northwest service area contract and West service area contract. Between August and September 2019, EdAdvance conducted 20 recruitment activities at 5 schools, with at least 210 youth across Connecticut. EdAdvance reported activities include:

- Recruited youth from middle schools and high schools to form tobacco-free student leadership and advocacy clubs;
- Partnered with a community college, health centers, and local organizations to collaborate on events and promote tobacco-free policies;
- Distributed flyers;
- Meeting in-person with and giving presentations to students;
- Peer presentations by students of the Tobacco Free Club encouraging other students to join;
- Interactions with students at expo, summit, and open house events;
- Use of "goody bag" incentives to educate and engage students;
- One school also conducted an environmental scan within their own school to understand the scope of the tobacco use problem in the neighborhood surrounding the school to address observed issues with vaping use. This led the 18 Club members to change the Tobacco Free Club name in the school to "Students Against Vaping;" and
- One post was made on Instagram announcing the upcoming Tobacco Free Summit; and project information was posted to the EdAdvance website.

Qualitative Outcomes: EdAdvance program staff reported that the school principal, club advisor, and club members from one school started the year off strong with efforts to educate the school, as a whole, on the importance of being tobacco and vape free. School personnel subsequently began integrating information about the dangers of vaping into classroom time. A variety of students, including some not previously involved in the Tobacco Free Club, expressed interest in the upcoming Tobacco Free Summit.

EdAdvance successes in conducting 36 activities for more than 650 participants from August through September 2019 are described in Table 1a.

Table 1a. EdAdvance Program Activities, 2019

Priorities and Objectives and Target Outcomes	August – September 2019 Status*
Recruitment	<p>20 recruitment activities were conducted at 5 schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributing flyers • Meeting in-person/giving presentations to students • Peer presentations by students of the tobacco free club encouraging other students to join • Interactions with students at expo, summit, and open house events • Use of “goody bag” incentives to educate and engage students
Trainings	None reported.
Meetings	<p>4 meetings held with more than 23 attendees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory Council members held two meetings to discuss and plan for the annual Summit. • The program coordinator communicated with the local swimming association to discuss the association’s updating its tobacco-free and anti-vaping policies. • Tobacco Free Club members planned recruitment and educational strategies to educate peers on the dangers of tobacco and vaping; conducted an environmental scan; and implemented tobacco-free education at expo and open house events (23 participants).
Presentations	<p>2 presentations conducted at 2 schools for 10 participants</p> <p>Club members had the opportunity to speak to many students and adults, and received feedback that individuals felt they had learned important new tobacco and vape free facts.</p>
Community Events	<p>2 events conducted at 2 schools for 10 participants</p> <p>Tobacco Free Club members established a tobacco and vape free education table in two schools at the Student Activity Expo, summit, and open house.</p>
Retailer Scans	<p>1 environmental scan with 18 participants</p> <p>Students from one school performed an environmental scan to understand the scope of the tobacco use problem in the neighborhood surrounding their school (18 participants).</p>
Photovoice	None reported.
Other	<p>2 activities conducted reaching more than 600 people</p> <p>In one school Club members changed the Tobacco Free Club name to "Students Against Vaping" to address, directly the struggles they see with vaping use within their own school (600 participants reached).</p> <p>In one school, the principal, club advisor and club members participated in efforts to educate the school on the importance of being tobacco- and vape-free. School staff integrated messages on the harms of vaping into classroom time.</p>
Media	<p>2 media posts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One post on Instagram announced the upcoming Tobacco Free Summit. • Project information was posted to the EdAdvance website.

Policy/Systems Change	1 policy change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vape Free policy was drafted to be added to one existing community tobacco-free policy.
Partner Engagement	2 partners engaged <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two persons served on the advisory council for one hospital to offer cessation classes throughout the community • A community-based group helped lead activities for the Summit as well as other tobacco free activities and education.
	*Note, the activities and events are reported for August-September 2019. No activities or events were reported for 2020, due to the COVID pandemic.

Southern Connecticut State University Snapshot

Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) was contracted by DPH to lead tobacco-free efforts on campus from the latter half of 2019 through the end of reporting. According to the August 2020 Quarterly DPH Contract Progress Report, SCSU was contracted to provide continued program oversight and implementation of program activities by: providing tobacco use control programming at the SCSU campus; promote and conduct at least 2 Tobacco Treatment Specialist Trainings (TTS); conduct 3 tobacco use control conferences; provide technical assistance to at least 4 colleges and universities within Connecticut on implementing tobacco free campus policy; provide technical assistance and training to other colleges and universities; and provide 40 or more Tobacco Education Sessions to community partners. Data were reported in the DPH Reporting Spreadsheet, from August through September of 2019, data from the Tobacco Free Report for January through March of 2020.

Quantitative Outcomes: Most of the reported activities were conducted by or in collaboration with the Tobacco Program Coordinator (TPC). The events hosted more than 569 college students, and reached over 3,400 public middle and high school students through Tobacco Free Clubs. To build capacity and support for tobacco-free campus policies and cessation programs at other CT colleges and universities, SCSU engaged 4 college and university partners and 1 community partner organization in virtual technical assistance (TA) sessions to provide technical assistance on tobacco free campus policies. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Tobacco Treatment Specialist (TTS) training was held virtually. Other activities also were limited by closings due to the coronavirus pandemic. Further, TPC began planning the first tobacco and vape free conference at Albertus Magnus College in the Spring Semester (2020). However, the conference was postponed due to contract delays. TPC will contact session speakers with a new date. SCSU reported activities include:

- Seventeen campus events were planned and implemented, including tobacco exchange events;
- At least 2 tobacco-free booths on campus were hosted, reaching up to 42 students across events;
- SCSU exceeded its objectives for training in 2019-2020 by training more than 425 people, including 179 young adults, on ENDS, vaping prevention, tobacco cessation and other topics;
- In 2019 SCSU conducted a tobacco treatment specialist training for 20 people;
- SCSU reported engaging students, staff, and community in 2019 through 2020 through various traditional, digital, and social media messages regarding the campus tobacco-free policy, including Facebook and Instagram posts;
- During the 2019-2020 reporting period, SCSU reached 102 people through tobacco exchange events, where people exchanged their tobacco products for gift cards; and
- 30 quit kits were given out at more than 23 classroom and other presentations and community events.

Qualitative Outcomes: SCSU program staff reported the program was implemented as intended per the contract and that “despite the global pandemic due to COVID-19, TPC was able to transition to remote work and continue to assist partners and students.” Program implementation included recruiting and hiring students on campus as tobacco-free ambassadors, training health services staff on tobacco cessation counseling, offering counseling for students, and hosting campus events on tobacco and vaping prevention, cessation, and education. The program subcontracted with UConn, Albertus Magnus College, Western CT University, and Northwestern CT Community College to implement tobacco prevention policies and programs on their campus with goal of implementing tobacco policies on each campus. Each campus received TA and support via emails, phone calls, webinars, and virtual workshops.

As reported by SCSU staff, a key factor for the success was offering quit kits in health services, where students could see program flyers in the waiting room and ask for a quit kit. A total of 15 quit kits were handed out. Staff reported that virtual TTS training (virtual due to the coronavirus pandemic) was "useful and impactful," with high levels of participant engagement and networking. An especially successful strategy to increase engagement was incorporating break-out sessions to share cessation best practices.

SCSU successes in conducting 104 activities for more than 990 participants and from October 2019 through June 2020 are described in Table 1b.

Table 1b. Southern Connecticut State University Program Activities, 2019-2020

Priorities and Objectives and Target Outcomes	2019 - 2020 Status
Recruitment	None reported
Trainings	<p>26 training events were held for more than 345 attendees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussed the proposed tobacco and vape free policy implementation with Be Well Director at Mt. Holyoke on their campus for Fall 2020. Provided guidance on signage, enforcement, cessation, staff and human resources, policy language, website, and communication. (2 attendees). Disseminated "New CT DPH Vaping Infographic for Young Adults" (7 attendees). Provided available resources requested by the Director of Public Health Nursing for the City of New Haven on EVALI and vaping for school nurses in New Haven middle and high schools (2 attendees). Provided a 1 hour informational discussion on vaping and cessation to the Director of Health and Wellness Services; disseminated flyers, brochures, and posters (3 attendees). Disseminated flyers, posters, parent- and youth- specific handouts, and other vaping related materials to New Haven Public Schools Health Wellness Committee (2 attendees). Revised quit kit to include benefits of sobriety and mental health with cessation; shared a sample quit kit with an alumnus at Meriden Rushford Healthcare; shared materials and articles on vaping and benefits of cessation for target population of adolescent boys dealing with substance abuse (4 attendees). Attended the district monthly wellness committee meeting; provided ENDS expertise in response to the vaping prevention campaign created for K-8 schools; distributed parent-related materials, ENDS posters and other materials. Delivered ENDS outreach materials to Davis School counselor in New Haven per request, on conducting a small scale vaping campaign for the school; however, the campaign was postponed due to other school priorities. Sent the committee director K-12 ENDS curriculum and other educational programs per request.

- Sacred Heart University (SHU) shared their poster presentation and comments from NECHA, resulting in 2 other colleges' interest in their own campus awareness campaign (3 attendees); offered resources and materials, including sharing their vaping research study, with Albertus Magnus (3 attendees).
- Wellness Center staff conducted 11 classroom presentations to SCSU students on general information and resources for vaping (179 attendees).
- Conducted an ENDS presentation with Trumball youth truancy counselor and followed up with the pdf version of the presentation, vaping flyers, and additional vaping related information.
- Pre-recorded the ENDS classroom PowerPoint presentation and made it available to 64 faculty at the end of the spring semester; also made this available for summer and Fall 2020 classes.

UConn:

- Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the TTS training was held virtually on 4 days in June 2020; TPC sent the TTS application to over 80 contacts and 4 college and prevention list servs; 22 applications were received for the training. Priority was given to applicants that work with youth at the college or high school level. TPC and DPH reviewed accepted applicants 14 applicants were selected.
- TPC conducted trainings, upon request, for individuals, such as counseling center staff, due to conference cancellations.
- TPC conducted two TTS trainings and trained 17 professionals as tobacco treatment specialists.
- TPC shared information on SCLC Webinar: Achieving a Healthier Campus by Going Tobacco-Free.

Albertus Magnus College:

- Hosted an ENDS educational booth at Albertus's Student Health and Wellness fair (38 attendees).
- Albertus requested and received TA from the TPC: ENDS training for staff, pre-recorded classroom presentation, quit kits, COVID and Tobacco risks, and the TTS training.
- Western: After the TTS training, TPC met with a professor of Exercise Sciences at Western, regarding grant funding opportunities. There is interest in garnering support for a tobacco and vape free policy; they also reached out to allies in Health Services and administrators to gauge interest.

Northwestern CT Community College:

- Reached out to Northwestern CT Community College regarding their vaping policy launch (5 attendees).
- TPC sent the Director of the CT Office of Rural Health, information on UCSF's Webinar on Engaging Rural Populations Using Quitlines.

	<p>Community Placemaking and Engagement Network (CPEN):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TPC met with Newhallville, a New Haven community partner, who was granted permission by DPH to take the BASICS pre-req to help assist with her new SMART recovery grant, and to learn more about tobacco/vaping. There is interest in taking the TTS training. TPC sent the youth quit kit and other vaping-specific materials to use with youth.
Meetings	<p>9 cessation meetings held for 2 attendees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both students reduced the strength of nicotine and became vape-free over the course of their cessation participation.
Presentations	<p>20 presentations conducted for more than 351 attendees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cessation support to 3 SCSU students. Quit kits were provided to 22 students in response to posted flyers. 50 attendees were provided anti-vaping outreach materials at multiple events. Wellness Center staff conducted classroom presentations over 10 sessions to provide general information and resources for vaping to 159 SCSU students. TPC presented vaping cessation and prevention to New Haven district Wellness Committee; and disseminated posters, handouts, and other materials (20 attendees). Presented as part of a panel at the Connecticut Public Health Association Conference entitled, "Development, Advocacy, Adoption and Implementation of Tobacco and Vape Free Policies" (70 attendees). Developed a presentation for the staff of Mauro-Sheridan School per their request. The presentation was cancelled due to postponed vaping prevention campaign (due to standardized testing). TPC followed up by sending parent-focused materials to the NH Public Schools Wellness Committee. Spoke with students at Albertus Magnus College about the risks of vaping and referred students interested in quitting. Conducted ENDS specific classroom presentation to SCSU men's health class (16 attendees), and Public Health classes (57 attendees). Updated ENDS presentation for SCSU audience. TPC and undergraduate intern held education tabling event in SCSU dorm hall, informing students of the risks of vaping; and students shared their vaping stories on camera; 4 kits were distributed.
Community Events	<p>15 events for 176 attendees</p> <p><i>Vape and tobacco exchange events with undergraduate interns:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Of 25 attendees, 6 who were tobacco users expressed interest in cessation for themselves or a friend. One set up an appointment for individual cessation services and met with TPC for 2 sessions. Of 46 attendees, 2 exchanged tobacco for electronic devices. One social smoker was given NRT gum. Of 31 attendees, 3 students were given NRT gum and/or brief cessation support.

	<p>Other events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee with Commuters event and distributed information on ENDS and cessation for 46 student attendees. • Announced new funding opportunities for colleges interested in adopting tobacco free policies at the CT Healthy Campus Initiative, "Cannabis Update and the Vaping Crisis." • Continued to promote virtual SCSU tobacco cessation to all community members; posted information on the wellness center's website; met with one student virtually who expressed interest in NRT and TPC. • Held education tabling event with undergraduate intern in SCSU dorm hall. Students were informed of the risks of vaping and had the opportunity to share their vaping stories on camera (4 kits distributed, 21 attendees); 3 students spoke on video about the effects of vaping. • With other wellness staff, conducted a live virtual event for new accepted SCSU students and their parents (3 student attendees). • SCSU undergraduate interns hosted a vaping educational booth to collect stories of addiction from students. Four students were interviewed on camera about their struggles with nicotine addiction. • TPC did not host any other events due to the Coronavirus pandemic and end of the semester. <p>Tobacco Free Club activities were planned and conducted at 5 public schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed 400 Goody Bags with tobacco-free giveaways and written materials for Teen/Children's Department at Danbury Library; giveaways to students during school lunch or after school program at a Q&A Table with vape information displays (950 students reached); hung posters and signs on PE locker rooms and bathroom doors (900 students reached). • Presented and hosted a display table at a Chamber of Commerce Event and Fall Open Houses at high school and middle school (250-300 students reached). • Hosted a school-wide outdoor Tobacco Free Activity Event with games and giveaways (100 students reached). • Hosted a Vaping Fact Table during lunch waves; students sign tobacco free commitment cards or send a card to a family member or friend to be tobacco and vape free); hung posters and signs on PE locker rooms and bathroom doors (600 students reached). • Exhibited leadership at School Health Fair; host a table with Tobacco Free games and Giveaways (600 students reached).
Retailer Scans	<p>3 scans planned or held for up to 21 colleges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPC received applications from 2 colleges and remains in contact with schools that show potential interest in the first round of policy funding, due on January 2020.

	<p><i>Activities in progress:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPC plans to conduct a scan of the university to ensure signage is visible and in good condition for when the campus re-opened in July 2020. • TPC plans to host a virtual conference for Albertus in November or December 2020 (due to the pandemic). Up to 18 colleges are planned to be invited.
Photovoice	None reported.
Coalition Activities	<p><i>Activity in progress:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working to extend partnerships to include Lyme-Old Lyme Prevention Coalition
Other	<p>9 activities conducted for more than 112 people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPC sent Albertus the contract for policy funding; worked with Southern's grants department and Albertus on finalizing the contract. (There have been COVID19 outbreak delays.) • 30 quit kits were handed out in health services to students while in the waiting room. • Cessation quit kit posters were distributed to each dorm hall floor (total 50). • Vaping education flyers were posted to dorm halls (total 13) • TPC emailed 9 students that requested vape quit kit; although there were no responses, TPC sent quit kits to all students. • TPC also supplied 10 revised quit kit flyers to display in the Health Services waiting room and other areas. • TPC and SCSU employees created a staff morale newsletter to disseminate daily wellness tips, including tobacco cessation. • TPC created a tobacco cessation flyer inviting staff and students to set up an individual appointment to quit any types of tobacco use via virtual or phone cessation sessions. The flyer was disseminated to all faculty/staff in the staff morale newsletter, and SCSU social media outlets. • TPC included the SCSU tobacco-free campus policy in the pre-recorded ENDS classroom presentation; information on the policy continues to be addressed on the SCSU website: https://inside.southernct.edu/tobacco-free .
Media	<p>6 Media events conducted for 4 people and reaching the community at large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPC was interviewed by SCSU journalism student, regarding the lung injury outbreak. The article was published in Feb. 2020. • TPC met with 4 members of the New Haven Public Schools district wellness committee to further assist in the development of the K-8 vaping prevention campaign. Part of the campaign will include a local New Haven TV show segment. • Posted the "Save the date for the Tobacco and Vape Free conference" on the Wellness Instagram and Facebook pages. • Posted the Virtual cessation counseling flyer to Wellness Center's Instagram and Facebook pages and to SCSU Resident Life's social media.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TPC provided ENDS prevention and cessation resources video for SCSU Prevention Week. This video was shared across all SCSU wellness social media. TPC and coordinator of the wellness center were interviewed in the beginning of the semester by a student reporter for the school newspaper. The article depicts the risks of vaping and resources available for students.
Policy/Systems Change	<p>8 policy activities reaching the campus at large</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TPC approached 2 students in violation of the policy in this reporting period. TPC announced the tobacco free college campus policy funding application at CT Healthy Campus Initiative meeting on 12/13/19. TPC sent individualized applications to Wesleyan, Albertus, UConn, Eastern, University of Hartford, and Fairfield University. TPC provided additional guidance to interested schools. An application was also sent to CT Health Campus Initiative list serv. <p><i>Activities in Progress:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TPC maintains SCSU website for the Tobacco and Vape Free Policy: https://inside.southernct.edu/tobacco-free. TPC uses policy reminders on most outreach materials and flyers posted around campus. Wellness center class presentations address policy in every presentation. Faculty/staff/students are encouraged to approach tobacco users to explain the policy and offer resources. TPC and wellness center staff routinely scan the university to ensure signage is visible and in good condition. Connecticut College remains interested in a policy, but needs to build consensus and community readiness. TPC will follow up with the Director of Wellbeing and Health Promotion (who postponed interactions until the Coronavirus has ended) for next training and round of funding.
Partner Engagement	<p>8 partner engagements involving broad sectors of the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One school counselor reached out (via Sacred Heart Kerry Morgan) for additional information and materials on ENDS, to create a bulletin board for her students. The founder of CPEN (Community Placemaking Engagement Network), a nonprofit to assist community members in the Newhallville area in New Haven, reached out to TPC after hearing about the conference. CPEN targets youth prevention in this at-risk (e.g., cigarettes, vape marijuana, or ENDS use) community. They expressed interest in training (on all tobacco products and TTS) for their peer educators and their social worker. Counseling partner serving LGBT: TPC can refer nicotine-addicted students to the counseling group; calm body calm mind; complementary and alternative treatments to reduce anxiety.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CT HOSA Future Health Professionals: Discussed future collaborations and conferences. <p><i>Activities in Progress:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albertus Magnus College: vaping presentations and additional trainings. • New Haven Public School serving low SES, minority population: Vaping campaign. • Meriden Rushford Healthcare serving Mental Illness, substance abuse, low SES: youth worker, cessation resources and quit kit framework. • TPC is talking further with UConn, University of New Haven and members from the Governor's Prevention Partnership.
<p>Note, some activities/events were not held due to the Coronavirus pandemic and end of the semester.</p>	