



Making Progress: Responsive Planning Partnership for a Fort Bragg Tobacco-Free Community lays plans and begins work to reach members of the active military in N.C.

Summary

Cessation, Availability, Pricing, and Smoke/Tobacco-Free Policy (CAPS) are the four pillars set by Fort Bragg Department of Public Health, UNC Lineberger Cancer Center and the Cumberland County Department of Public Health to address tobacco-free environments on Fort Bragg. The partnership has collaborated on a comprehensive approach to combat and prevent tobacco use on Fort Bragg and in the surrounding community for over a year. Projects to date include improving and promoting the cessation programs offered to Fort Bragg soldiers and their families and efforts to understand and improve the tobacco-free environment on base.

Challenge

Fort Bragg is among the largest military bases in the world by population, and North Carolina touts itself as the “Nation’s Most Military Friendly State.” North Carolina has the third largest military presence in the country – with more than 700,000 veterans calling North Carolina home – many of whom reside in Cumberland County. Fort Bragg hosts nearly 50,000 active duty soldiers; more than 67% of these soldiers and their families live off-post in an eight-county region surrounding the base.

According to the US Army Public Health Center’s 2019 Health of the Force report, 28% of Fort Bragg soldiers self-reported use of at least one tobacco product in the last 30 days prior to their annual health examination; this rate is higher than the NC average of 24% of adults using any tobacco products in the past 30 days. Military members and their families have unique challenges and barriers to quitting tobacco use, such as frequent moves, deployment, and behavioral health issues linked to active military duty, such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Planning to Action

The CAPS plan will guide partners to use programs and policies to address tobacco use on Fort Bragg. Early work includes two projects. First, Cumberland County worked with Fort Bragg Public Health to create and roll out a tobacco cessation media campaign tailored to Fort Bragg active duty soldiers and beneficiaries who lived on Fort Bragg and within a 40-mile radius of the base. Secondly, University of North Carolina Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center conducted a pilot study on prices on- and off-post and created a density map of tobacco retailers within that 40-mile radius of the base.

Early Results

Tobacco Retailers on and around Fort Bragg were identified and evaluated for price using geographic information system (GIS) data and onsite evaluations. This assessment revealed that Fort Bragg did not meet the guidelines provided by Department of Defense (DoD) that on-base retailers should not price tobacco products more than 5 percent lower than off-base retailers. Another report analyzed 15 Designated Tobacco Areas (DTAs) on Fort Bragg and their compliance with the base’s official tobacco policy. This process provided valuable insight on actions needed to maintain and improve

Quote

“The Partnership for a Fort Bragg Tobacco-Free Community moved the needle on tobacco control work in our community. This collaborative process showed our community, our leadership and federal partners that there are disparities and gaps in the military population when it comes to access to cessation services and the sheer volume of tobacco retailers in walking distance around the base.”

Dr. Jennifer Green
Health Director Cumberland County
Department of Public Health





DTA adjacent to sidewalk to hospital entrance

compliance of a very valuable policy. Lastly, tailored tobacco treatment training has been conducted for health care providers, including behavioral health professionals and pharmacists who work on Fort Bragg. All of these projects contributed to the development of the

Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Fort Bragg Draft Strategic Plan that address Cessation, Availability, Pricing, and Smoke/tobacco-Free Policy (CAPS) and the further development of the Partnership for a Fort Bragg Tobacco-Free Community. The Partnership had the opportunity to present its work to U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams and other national organizations at an event Feb 4, 2020.

Lessons Learned



(left to right) Alysson Corbo, MPH, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Jerome Adams, Ashley Curtice, Cumberland County Department of Public Health

- 1) Engage new partnership opportunities in your region, such as the South Central Health Directors Group, Veterans Affairs (VA) and other North Carolina military bases.
- 2) Take advantage of the wealth of resources and evidence-based practices to assist in implementing the shovel-ready projects outlined in the plan.
- 3) Seek new funding opportunities to enhance and advance this work.

Quote

"The partnership between UNC, Cumberland County, and the Fort Bragg Department of Public Health has increased the capacity of all three organizations to implement and evaluate strategies aimed at improving the tobacco environment for Fort Bragg Soldiers and their families. Through this strategic partnership, we have been able to leverage resources across organizations to tailor evidence-based strategies to fit the Fort Bragg setting. These strategies have laid the foundation for reducing tobacco usage rates in this disproportionately impacted population in the coming years."

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To learn more about smoke-free policies in N.C., visit www.tobaccopreventionandcontrol.ncdhhs.gov.



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