

Are you effectively reaching African American tobacco users within your community?

**“BLACK
FOLKS
DON’T USE
QUITLINES.”**

**Exploring the
true story.**



PROMOTING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES.
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The Health Education Council (HEC) has information that can help improve quitline outreach and services for African American tobacco users.

The Need:

National studies show that after smoking at higher rates than Whites since 1965, African Americans began smoking at lower rates than Whites in 2001. Despite this major public health accomplishment, disparities between Blacks and Whites are still present. Are quitlines doing enough to successfully reach and serve African American tobacco users?

The Concern:

When the National African American Tobacco Education Network (NAATEN) began discussing the value of promoting quitlines to African American tobacco users, many African American anti-tobacco advocates were convinced that quitlines services were not considered a culturally relevant cessation intervention. The prevailing sentiment was “African Americans and Black folks don’t use quitlines.”

The Plan:

As a result of the prevailing sentiments, NAATEN, under the administration of the Health Education Council, and the North American Quitline Consortium (NAQC), embarked on a year long assessment seeking to determine how effective quitline services and operations were for African American and Black tobacco users.

The Importance:

The promotion, use and value of quitlines within Black and African American communities are an untold yet evolving story. The quitline assessment report is designed to raise awareness among anti-tobacco advocates, and provide recommendations to enhance quitline services for Black and African American tobacco users.

The HEC’s Findings—and How They Affect Quitlines Nationwide

Quitline Call Volume and African Americans

Of the 15 states sampled in the NAATEN/NAQC assessment, 73% were unable to report the percentage of African Americans in the tobacco-using population. When measured against call volume, NAATEN/NAQC found, that of the 4 states who reported the percentage of African Americans in the tobacco-using population, only 1 state seems to be reaching this community very well. The remaining 3 were not as successful in reaching this population.

This Means...

Nationwide, quitlines are consistently gathering racial and ethnic identities of callers. However, it is less clear whether or not states are using the correct formula to ensure that the use of quitlines by African American tobacco users is in proportion to the use of quitlines by other races.

What is the percentage of African American tobacco users among all tobacco users in your state? African American tobacco users account for what percentage of calls to your quitline? Unless these numbers are similar, your quitline may not be reaching as many African American tobacco users as it should.

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Promoting Quitlines to African Americans

More than half of the quitlines surveyed are not currently using targeted strategies to promote their services to African Americans. Only one state from the sample engages community leaders, specifically pastors, to spread the word about cessation and the quitline.

This Means...To resonate with African Americans—who are defined by distinct historical, cultural, contextual and geographical characteristics—communication strategies must consider issues of language, literacy, positive and salient imagery, multi-generations, and the diversity within the African American community.

Using Community Based Resources & Self Help Materials

Nearly all (87%) of quitlines in our sample reported that they do not provide self-help materials tailored for African American callers.

67% percent of quitlines in the sample reported having no African American-specific community based referral resources in their referral database.

This Means...Given the fact that self-help materials and community based resources exist specifically for African American tobacco users, the question must be asked why more quitlines are not offering these resources to callers.

As a second part of this important assessment, NAATEN stakeholders completed quitline site visits, interviewed key informants and participated in facilitated discussions within their organizations.

Stakeholders reported the following perspectives after their visit:

- Based on their positive experiences, stakeholders reported that they are more likely to refer African American tobacco users to quitlines.
- 61% report they are highly likely to now make these referrals.
- They felt that recruiting African American quit coaches would improve the capacity to address African American’s cessation needs.
- A few indicated a need for quit coaches to partake in formal sensitivity and cultural competency training.
- Stakeholders indicated that there is no standard process for referring callers to community based cessation resources.
- Most stakeholders indicated that African Americans are generally unfamiliar with quitline services and that this needs to be addressed with tailored marketing strategies sponsored by both state and service provider resources.
- Nearly 70% of stakeholders responded that they are highly likely to promote quitlines through national African American organizational leadership.

Next Steps:

Based on the assessment, NAATEN stakeholders developed a series of recommendations for state tobacco control programs and quitline service providers. We believe if these steps are implemented African American communities can move towards a positive perception of quitline services, the reach of quitlines in the community will be increased and effectiveness of quitlines for African American users will increase. To read about these recommendations, download the report at: www.healthedcouncil.org.