

Tobacco Policy Change: National High School Rodeo Association

Summary

The Michael Glynn Memorial Coalition (MGMC) was awarded a Tobacco Disparities Grant from the South Dakota Department of Health-Tobacco Control Program to promote long-term change aimed at reducing disparate tobacco use. As part of their efforts, the MGMC sought to partner with the South Dakota High School Rodeo Association (SDHSRA) to encourage the organization to adopt a tobacco-free rodeo grounds policy. Ultimately, the MGMC discovered that if they wanted the SDHSRA to adopt a tobacco-free rodeo grounds policy that the policy would first need to be adopted at the national level through the National High School Rodeo Association (NHSRA).



Challenge

The NHSRA already addressed tobacco use in its policy/rules manual in two ways:

- Contestants will be disqualified for the use of tobacco products while in the arena during any rodeo performance.
- No person, animal, tack or equipment can display any form of signage in the arena during any NHSRA sanctioned event promoting alcohol, tobacco or any other product or service which is illegal for a minor to use or be in possession of.

However, the MGMC wanted to meet with the SDHSRA Board of Directors to request a change in wording and see the word "arena" replaced with the word "grounds" in each of the policy statements, which would imply a tobacco-free rodeo grounds policy.

Barriers

It was discovered that the SDHSRA is required to follow the policies set forth by the NHSRA. Therefore, the request for a change in the policy would have to go before the NHSRA Board of Directors. This group only meets twice per year, which created a barrier in terms of having limited time to request a policy change.

Another barrier was changing social norms related to rodeo and spit tobacco use. At a meeting, one parent (in a room of approximately 200) stated that he thought spit tobacco use was "normal" and that rodeo kids should be expected to use it. Thankfully, another parent stood up and said he thought it was time for it NOT to be considered a normal and expected behavior. He then asked the directors to approve the policy change to not only include the youth, but also the adults. After he spoke, over a dozen additional parents echoed his remarks.

Results

In September 2018, Joyce Glynn, Project Director of the MGMC, sent information to the SDHSRA Board of Directors and asked them to submit a rule proposal to the National Office in regards to the wording of tobacco being used in the rodeo arena. SDHSRA's National Representative agreed to present the rule change to the NHSRA. The SDHSRA also agreed to sponsor a Tobacco Free Zone and continue to be proactive on the issue. Joyce indicated that she could provide tobacco-free signage for Regional and State rodeos to help with policy enforcement.

One parent, who was in support of changing the policy, said,

“ we should all be taking a stance against our kids using spit tobacco and we should all be held accountable as role models. ”

Successes

Joyce met with the SDHSRA Board of Directors a few times to discuss the need for this policy change and also to explain that youth are not using tobacco inside of the arena, but rather they are using it outside of the arena throughout the rodeo grounds. The SDHSRA Board agreed to take the request the national level and also endorsed a statement, which will be in effect at all Regional and State rodeos.

The SD Representative on the NHSRA Board of Directors brought the rule change forward at their meeting in January 2019, where the rule change was approved. It went on to be read in front of the entire NHSRA Board at their July 2019 meeting during the National Finals Rodeo and was approved.

This policy change will effect each high school rodeo association in the United States. The MGMC is excited and proud to have been at the forefront of this change and they look forward to working with other state associations to communicate the policy change.

Additionally, this policy work brought forth an opportunity to discuss youth spit tobacco use and gave a voice to many parents who helped to address the prevalence of spit tobacco use at youth rodeo events. During one SDHSRA Board of Directors meeting, the directors specifically thanked the MGMC for addressing this issue.

NEXT STEPS

Signs are being ordered and will be provided to all Practice Rodeo sites, as well as Region and State Finals rodeo sites.

Evidence Based Interventions

Tobacco-Free Policy: The adoption of a tobacco-free policy by the NHSRA and the SDHSRA created an evidence-based environmental change. Tobacco-free policies are effective in reducing secondhand smoke exposure, reducing tobacco use initiation among young people, reducing tobacco use prevalence, reducing morbidity and mortality related to tobacco use, and increasing the number of people who quit using tobacco.¹

Resources:

1. The Community Guide. Tobacco Use and Secondhand Smoke Exposures: Smoke-Free Policies – 2012. <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/sites/default/files/assets/Tobacco-Smokefree-Policies.pdf>

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