

ABSTRACT

Tobacco usage is an epidemic in the United States causing increased morbidity and mortality from largely preventable chronic diseases. Low-income, underserved minority communities tend to bear much of this burden, as knowledge about the harms of smoking and secondhand exposure are limited. Casinos, with smoking, allowed policies, provide an unnecessary exposure to smoke while also providing an opportunity to promote smoking cessation among smokers. The Smoke-Free Casino project was implemented with the goal of assessing attitudes about smoking in casinos and the knowledge of the harmful effects of secondhand smoke. Flyers and programming were used to engage with the community about this topic. These interventions produced a meaningful impact through expanding awareness, however, engagement and utilization of resources remained low amongst individuals. Going forward, more in-person events and promotion of the Smoke-Free Casino Initiative will be a major focus in order to reach even more individuals.

BACKGROUND

- Cigarette smoking has long been recognized as a significant contributor to poor health. In Arkansas, smoking (including cigarettes, cigars, e-cigarettes, and smokeless tobacco) has been determined to be a major risk factor in heart disease, cancer, chronic lower respiratory disease and strokes – the top four of the 15 leading causes of death to Arkansans of all ages.
- The Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Arkansas’s goals for tobacco cessation include community prevention, community engagement, and public awareness campaigns.
- Smoking related illness impacts the long-term health of minority patients and contributes to health disparities. Second-hand smoke confers the same risks.
- Alleviating the risk from second-hand smoke by eliminating smoking at a local casino provides an avenue to improve health outcomes in the area

OBJECTIVES

- Initiative introduced with the aim of identify and analyze the number of patrons and employees who report being negatively impacted by the current smoking policy at Saracen Casino in hopes of changing the casino to a smoke-free zone.

METHODS

- *Participants*
 - Participants included patrons of the local casinos in the state of Arkansas who participated in focus groups hosted via Zoom and online surveys
- *Activities*
 - Patrons received a survey that assessed their attitude and knowledge of public smoking and second-hand smoke.
 - Patrons who provided an E-mail address and identify as smokers will receive information on smoking cessation services.
 - Gather the information from surveys and focus groups and with community stakeholders we will compile a presentation promoting a smoke-free zone at the Saracen Casino
- *Community Engagement*
 - Identify potential participants via recruitment at the local Spoken Word Contest for No Menthol Sunday hosted by the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Arkansas and the Boys and Girls Club of Jefferson County



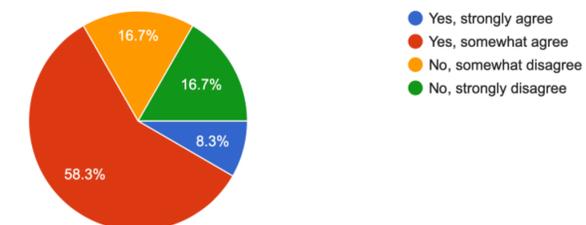
- Smoke-Free Casino Focus Group Flyer

RESULTS

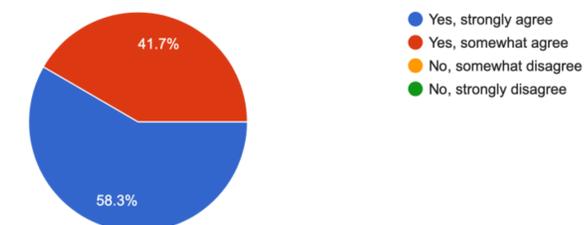
- Of the patrons who participated in the focus group and were also surveyed the majority used tobacco/tobacco products however they agreed that secondhand smoke was not only at times bothersome to themselves but other patrons as well.

RESULTS

Does secondhand smoke bother you in a casino?
12 responses



Regardless of whether smoke bothers you, do you believe smoke bothers casino employees and other guests?
12 responses



CONCLUSIONS

- As this project depends on the feedback from the community it is necessary to expand engagement for true impact. The Smoke-Free Casino project has the potential to be expanded to other community partners and reach even more patrons. Ultimately, the primary goal is to improve advertising and awareness of the project in hopes of eliminating smoking in the local casino to alleviate unnecessary exposure to harmful effects of second-hand smoke.