Research shows that providing pharmacists with specialized training for tobacco cessation counseling leads to significant increases in counseling activities. Although fewer than 8% of pharmacists have had formal training in tobacco cessation counseling, 87% are interested in receiving formal training, 70% believe that training will increase the number of patients that they counsel, and 94% believe that training will increase the quality of the assistance that they provide to patients. In response to this interest and lack of expertise, a group of pharmacy faculty members in California and leading tobacco researchers have created a 6–12 hour modular tobacco cessation counseling curriculum for students in the health professions, entitled Rx for Change: Clinician-Assisted Tobacco Cessation. The training, which has been incorporated as required course-work at all six California schools of pharmacy (past 4 years), the UCSF School of Medicine (past 3 years), and the UCSF School of Dentistry (past year), equips students with the ability to intervene with all tobacco users—including patients who are not yet considering quitting. Based on an enormously positive response to the program, we are proposing to disseminate the tobacco curriculum to schools of pharmacy across the country. The specific aims of the project are to:

AIM 1. Recruit two faculty members from each of the 91 U.S. pharmacy schools to attend a two-day train-the-trainer program, to be held in San Francisco, California.

AIM 2. Provide faculty participants with sufficient knowledge and skills to implement the Rx for Change curriculum at their schools.

AIM 3. Attain a high level of curriculum implementation at pharmacy schools across the U.S.

AIM 4. Evaluate the curriculum using a four-tiered approach that incorporates process and outcome measures.

AIM 5. Publicize and make the Rx for Change materials available to other allied health professions.

The primary goal of this dissemination project is to provide pharmacy instructors with in-depth training, enabling them to effectively implement the Rx for Change curriculum at their schools. Faculty and student support will be offered through a curriculum Web site, to be housed at and maintained by the UCSF School of Pharmacy. Curriculum implementation, utilization of the Web site, and impact of the curriculum will be evaluated. Incorporating comprehensive tobacco cessation training as part of coursework for pharmacy students will better enable licensed pharmacists of the future to assist patients with quitting. Importantly, this program serves as a vehicle for nationwide dissemination of the Clinical Practice Guideline for Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence.

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