

Addressing Tobacco Workgroup Meetings at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

by Jill Williams, MD

Individuals with a psychiatric or substance use disorder smoke 44% of the cigarettes smoked in the United States (Lasser 2000). Despite these findings, this major segment of smokers has received little attention from either tobacco control specialists or behavioral health treatment providers. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which has been a leader in formulating tobacco policy and promoting tobacco treatment, is sponsoring a series of workgroup meetings to highlight this problem and work towards the creation of a strategic plan. Attendees of the meetings include nationally recognized experts and leaders in fields of Tobacco Control, Nicotine and Tobacco Research, Mental Health and Addictions. The meetings are being organized and facilitated by Drs. Douglas Ziedonis and Jill Williams of the Tobacco Dependence Program.



The first of these meetings was held on November 6, 2002 in Princeton, NJ. This meeting was a focused review of the Clinical Epidemiology and Neurobiology surrounding tobacco use in the mentally ill and addictions populations. There was great enthusiasm among the expert group for the topic and they felt the meeting was highly relevant and also timely. They endorsed the need for a national organized effort to reach these under-served and often highly nicotine-dependent groups. Gaps in research and evidence-based practices for these groups as well as barriers to implementing interventions on the systems, programmatic and clinical levels were discussed. Other attendees included representatives from branches of NIMH, NIDA, NIAAA, SAMHSA and NCI with an emphasis on promoting partnerships on this topic and creating shared funding initiatives. The next two meetings, focusing on Clinical and Program Aspects of Tobacco Dependence Treatment and System and Policy Change Perspectives are scheduled to occur in early 2003.

Communicate with us!

Please let us know what you think about

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