



Quit Tobacco System for Employees: How FirstHealth of the Carolinas Earned the Gold Star

FirstHealth of the Carolinas, a hospital system which includes FirstHealth Montgomery Memorial Hospital, FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital and FirstHealth Richmond Memorial Hospital, achieved excellence in providing a tobacco-free environment and comprehensive cessation system for their employees and were awarded a Gold Star from Prevention Partners on February 18, 2010. FirstHealth’s Quit-Tobacco Team worked very hard to complete the necessary requirements to earn recognition.

The key components required to earn the Gold Star recognition include: establishing a tobacco-free property policy, creating a system approach to identify and refer employees to cessation resources, having comprehensive cessation benefits and incentives and conducting evaluation on these key components. FirstHealth of the Carolinas achieved the key components by making the following enhancements to their tobacco cessation program for employees, FirstQuit, which began in 2003.

Tobacco-Free Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established a tobacco-free steering committee that included leadership from all areas, including tobacco-users, security, facilities management, marketing, etc. • Added tobacco-free policy change information to the agenda of all standing meetings
System Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All new employees are required to attend a two day, New Employee Orientation where they are educated on the FirstQuit program and EHIP (Employee Health Improvement Program), as well as the process to join • Through EHIP, employees voluntarily take a health behaviors assesment every 6 months and set goals to improve health; tobacco use is assessed through this program and tobacco-using employees are referred to FirstQuit
Benefits & Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees participate in the FirstQuit program free of charge; it is a 12-month program that consists of an education component, a two-hour Quit Class, ongoing cessation counseling, and NRT therapy • Employees may earn up to \$480 in bonuses for quitting or maintaining a tobacco-free status through the Employee Health Improvement Program
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants in the FirstQuit program are assessed at 3, 6, and 12 months • The number of employees enrolling each year is evaluated along with the six month quit rate



FirstHealth of the Carolinas’ Quit Tobacco Team
*(L-R) Linda Harte, Barbara Bennett, Dan Biediger, Heather Mountz, Melva Fager Okun, John Krahnert, MD, Elise McInnis, Ken Lewis
(not pictured: Chris Miller)*