

Northern Saskatchewan Breathe Easy (NSBE)

Northern Saskatchewan Breathe Easy (NSBE) is a commercial tobacco reduction initiative implemented by the Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority and its Partners (Prince Albert Grand Council, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, and Lac La Ronge Indian Band). NSBE is implemented under the First Nations and Inuit Component of the Federal Tobacco Control Strategy.

Tobacco misuse continues to be the cause of a number of preventable chronic diseases leading to premature death in Canada. Tobacco use is a barometer for social inequities and by extension health disparities. Poverty, inadequate housing, welfare policies and general disadvantage lead to and link to tobacco use.

The overall goal of the NSBE is that northern Saskatchewan communities will be free of commercial tobacco misuse while being respectful of the traditional use of tobacco. While traditional tobacco is used for spiritual, cultural and ceremonial purposes, commercial tobacco is very harmful to our health.

The objectives of NSBE include:

- To address the high smoking rates among First Nations living on-reserve in northern Saskatchewan;
- To develop and deliver comprehensive, culturally sensitive and effective tobacco reduction initiatives at a pace acceptable to our communities;
- To promote the health of our communities by decreasing the prevalence of commercial tobacco smoking and smokeless tobacco use among all age groups, but in particular among youth and pregnant women;
- To decrease the uptake of smoking among youth;
- To decrease the impacts of environmental tobacco smoke on the health of our community members;
- To engage our community leadership in learning about, voicing opinions and supporting commercial tobacco reduction strategies.

Activities

Several activities have been identified and will be implemented under the six (6) Essential Elements of a comprehensive tobacco control strategy namely: Protection, Reduced access to tobacco products, Prevention, Education, Cessation, and Data Collection and Evaluation.

Community ownership, engagement and capacity building is critical to the success of our proposed activities. This will give the communities the skills, knowledge and abilities to continue to support and implement tobacco reduction activities after this project ends. Communities will be engaged and involved in the project as it is planned, developed and implemented.