



# Aria Community Health Center Goes Smokefree



## THE SUCCESS

In July 2022, the Aria Community Health Center (ACHC), serving Tulare, Kings, and Fresno communities in the Central Valley, **implemented a new smokefree policy for all 30 of its medical, dental, and behavioral health facilities.**

Now, ACHC is taking steps to integrate a referral program for cessation services with help from Kick It California and Voices Inspiring Valley Action (VIVA), a project of the American Cancer Society Cancer Network.

## THE PROCESS

During monthly virtual and telephone meetings, the VIVA Project was able to provide ACHC with important resources to support a smokefree policy, including: 1) data on the benefits of smokefree facilities, 2) sample smokefree policy language, 3) sample signage for enforcing smokefree policies, 4) assistance with educational material development for patients, and 5) help with observational surveys to collect baseline data before the implementation of a new policy. Utilizing the resources and data from VIVA, the Senior Lead Care Manager and Enhanced Care Manager would then communicate the information to ACHC management for further review and approval.

VIVA also coordinated routine technical assistance meetings with ACHC staff and Kick It California to integrate electronic tobacco cessation referrals into the health center's electronic health system.

RISE and LLA projects (Fresno, Tulare, and Kings) helped with ideas on how to promote cessation resources in rural communities.

## NEXT STEPS

A pre-policy observation survey was conducted prior to the policy implementation date and a post-policy implementation survey is expected to be conducted by December 2022. The e-referral process is set to launch fully in October 2022, with a press release announcing the new policy and electronic referral system.

## LESSONS LEARNED

In reflecting on the process so far, the VIVA team has the following advice for other projects hoping to pass similar policy:

- » **Be flexible and work at the pace of the healthcare campus.**
- » **Attend partner and coalition meetings to present the resources you have to offer.**
- » **Assemble the right team. Once VIVA and ACHC got the ball rolling, they weren't afraid to ask other projects (LLAs, Kick IT CA, TECC, RISE) for technical assistance as they identified certain needs.**
- » **Working with Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) is key to reaching the underserved and uninsured populations in rural communities.**

