

*Substance Abuse***Evaluation of the Implementation of the AHCPR Smoking
Cessation Guideline**

ID# 030499

Allina Health System (Minneapolis, MN)
\$48,171 (16 months from 01/01/97 to 04/30/98)
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) provided funds to help Allina Medical Clinic, a large multispecialty group practice, evaluate how to implement the US Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) Smoking Cessation Guideline. A team of researchers from the University of Wisconsin's Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention helped Allina to conduct a group randomized trial to determine the effectiveness of a smoking cessation strategy based on the ACHPR guideline. The researchers planned to compare six-month quit rates between smokers in intervention and control clinics, assess how the guidelines were implemented at the clinic level, and tabulate the total cost of guideline implementation as well as the cost per smoker. Through patient exit interviews, researchers discovered that patients in intervention clinics were only marginally more likely to be asked if they smoked and about as likely to receive advice to quit smoking as those in control clinics. No significant differences in quit rates between intervention and control clinics were detected. The researchers concluded that the implementation strategy lacked a key component: a performance-based physician incentive plan to promote compliance with the guidelines. Based on the groundwork established under this project, Allina Health System received a \$500,000 grant (ID# 036023) from RWJF's national program, Addressing Tobacco in Managed Care. Under this grant, Allina will incorporate physician incentives, performance expectations and a patient follow-up system into its group practice.

BACKGROUND

In April 1996, the US Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) issued a guideline to help health care providers deliver tobacco prevention and cessation interventions as part of routine primary care. Allina Health System (Allina), a Minneapolis-based integrated health care network with 65 clinics, 20 hospitals, and a network of 7,000 contracted providers covering more than one million people, has endorsed tobacco control as part of its mission. Policymakers at Allina, guided by research evidence on the cost-effectiveness of tobacco-control interventions in health care settings, chose tobacco control as Allina's first system-wide health improvement initiative and used the AHCPR guideline as the basis of their proposed intervention. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) expected this study to provide insight into the barriers to full-scale implementation of smoking cessation guidelines in group practice clinics, a managed care setting they regarded as understudied.