

FSU now can train tobacco specialists

By Monica West

Democrat writer

Mary Dailey was Florida's first certified tobacco treatment specialist, but receiving the training she needed wasn't easy. At the time, there were only four accredited training programs in the nation.

So after Dailey traveled to the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey to receive her certification, she and Andree Aubrey, director of FSU College of Medicine Area Health Education Center, saw the need to create a certification program in Florida. "We wanted to keep Florida dollars in Florida by training the health profession workforce so that those people wouldn't have to take their training dollars out of state," said Aubrey.

Included in starting a training program, however, was the daunting task of receiving accreditation through the Association for the Treatment of Tobacco Use and Dependence, a time-consuming and labor-intensive process.

The Area Health Education Center began offering the training program for tobacco treatment specialists in February 2010. Since then it has held four training sessions.

FSU began the accreditation process in September 2010 by sending an application that included all training materials and PowerPoint presentations as well as evaluations and test results from previous training sessions.

Aubrey added jokingly, "We like to say our application must have weighed 25 pounds. It was a massive binder."

The ATTUD accreditation committee, consisting of national and international experts on tobacco dependency treatment, sent back the application in December with recommendations. Aubrey said that AHEC's program was lucky — it was required to resubmit only one time.

The tobacco treatment specialist training program is now accredited through 2016, allowing Florida health professionals to be trained in-state to treat tobacco dependency effectively and efficiently.

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