

HOW ADVOCATES AND POLICYMAKERS CAN BOLSTER TOBACCO CESSATION



Access to robust, evidence-based smoking cessation is essential for improving public health and reducing healthcare costs. Across the U.S. and around the world, cities, states and countries do not provide equal access to nor equal support of the necessary tobacco cessation services.

Advocates and policymakers play a crucial role in supporting effective cessation strategies. Summarizing important points from the [US Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#) and the [American Lung Association \(ALA\)](#), this fact sheet provides detailed recommendations to enhance smoking cessation efforts.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPLEMENT

Comprehensive Cessation Programs

- **Access to Treatment:** Ensure individuals have access to guideline-recommended cessation treatments, including counseling and FDA-approved medications.
- **Insurance Coverage:** Advocate for health insurance plans, including Medicaid and private insurers, to cover all recommended cessation treatments without barriers, inclusive of FDA-approved pharmacotherapy and behavioral interventions.
- **Quit Lines:** Improve access to state-funded quit lines that align with current treatment guidelines.

Supportive Policies

- **Tobacco-Free Laws:** Implement and enforce comprehensive tobacco-free laws in public places to reduce exposure to secondhand smoke and vaping aerosols.
- **Tobacco Taxes:** Increase tobacco taxes to reduce smoking rates.
- **Endgame:** Phase out the sale of commercial tobacco products.

Research Evaluation

- **Ongoing Research:** Support research on new and effective tobacco cessation interventions and how to increase utilization and the impact of existing programs.
- **Program Evaluation:** Regularly evaluate cessation programs to ensure they are effective and make improvements based on findings.

Public Awareness and Education

- **Campaigns:** Fund and support public education campaigns to raise awareness about the benefits of quitting tobacco and available cessation resources.
- **Community Engagement:** Involve communities, especially those disproportionately affected by tobacco use, in developing and sharing educational materials.
- **Education:** Educate the public on how receipt of tobacco treatment increases smoking cessation success rates.

Healthcare Provider Training

- **Training Programs:** Provide training for healthcare providers on effective tobacco cessation interventions and how to support patients in quitting.
- **Integration into Routine Care:** Encourage the integration of tobacco cessation support into routine healthcare visits at all health care facilities.

Equity and Inclusion

- **Address Disparities:** Focus on reducing related tobacco-disparities by providing targeted support to populations with higher commercial tobacco use rates, such as low-income communities and racial/ethnic minorities.
- **Cultural Competence:** Develop culturally competent cessation programs that address the specific needs of diverse populations.
- **Implement treatment to all populations:** Treat tobacco use as a chronic condition and implement treatment to all individuals, regardless of clinical condition.