Healthcare Systems Toolkit

A guide to integrate tobacco treatment into health systems.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of mortality, and health systems play an important role in tobacco treatment. As California still has about 3 million smokers, CA Quits is a statewide initiative to facilitate health systems change with tobacco treatment across providers, plans, and public health partners. To generate collective impact on tobacco treatment, CA Quits hosts learning collaboratives for providers and workgroups for Medi-Cal plans and public health partners. The California Smokers' Helpline, the state quitline, is a key partner providing tobacco treatment services.

Toolkit Highlights

This toolkit offers key elements for integrating tobacco assessment and counseling practices using a brief intervention framework. Healthcare professionals and staff may use this to help with quality metrics or clinical services. Public health partners may use this to complement policy or program efforts. Please contact us for more information and discussion.

☐ **Ask, Advise, Refer**

☐ **Policy & Procedure**

☐ **Referral Systems**

☐ **Medications & Pharmacists**

For additional guidance or technical assistance, contact the CA Quits team. For more information, visit https://caquits.com.

Tobacco Treatment Framework

The "*5 As*" (*Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist, and Arrange*) is the gold standard for tobacco treatment.

A brief intervention, *Ask, Advise, Refer* takes only **3 minutes** to connect for help with "*Assess, Assist, and Arrange.*"

ASK

- **Goal**: Ask about tobacco use at every visit.
- **Tip**: Ask about all tobacco products, not just smoking.
- "*Have you ever used a tobacco product, including chew, vapes or e-cigarettes?*"

ADVISE

- **Goal**: Advice from a health professional can increase quit attempts.
- **Tip**: Quitting tobacco improves overall health and there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.
- *"Quitting is one of the best things you can do for your health."*

Refer/Connect

- **Goal**: Make electronic referrals to connect your patients with the Helpline
- **Tip**: Additional clinic support staff can submit or pend a referral.
- *"The Helpline provides free help that is very useful. Can I have them call you?"*

Click here to download the Ask, Advise, Refer script flyer

Putting Policies in Place

Addressing tobacco assessment and treatment in health care systems includes setting policies at the organizational and provider levels. Feedback from all staff is important when assessing the current workflow for strengths and gaps, and where improvements can be made. Implementation support may be available with your local public health partners or Medi-Cal managed care plan health education teams.

Here are three things you can incorporate outside and inside the health care system:

1. **100% Smoke and tobacco-free campus policy** ([sample policy](#))
   - **Purpose**: To protect the health and well-being of staff, patients and visitors by reducing secondhand smoke exposure.
   - **Benefit**: To encourage an environmental standard for staff, patients, and visitors not to use tobacco products.

2. **Tobacco assessment and treatment policy** ([sample policy](#))
   - **Purpose**: To identify the roles and responsibilities for staff and describe available treatment resources.
   - **Benefit**: To assist staff and leadership with knowledge and training which provides a basis for quality improvement.

3. **Process map of workflows** ([see variety of templates](#))
   - **Purpose**: To create a visual aid of staff roles and responsibilities and treatment resources in relation to a patient encounter.
   - **Benefit**: To help map staff roles and workflow processes for quick reference, including population health management.

See example of a Swimlane workflow on the next page

An example of a Swimlane

Acronyms: SHS - Secondhand smoke, **EHR** - Electronic Health Record, **MA** - Medical Assistant.
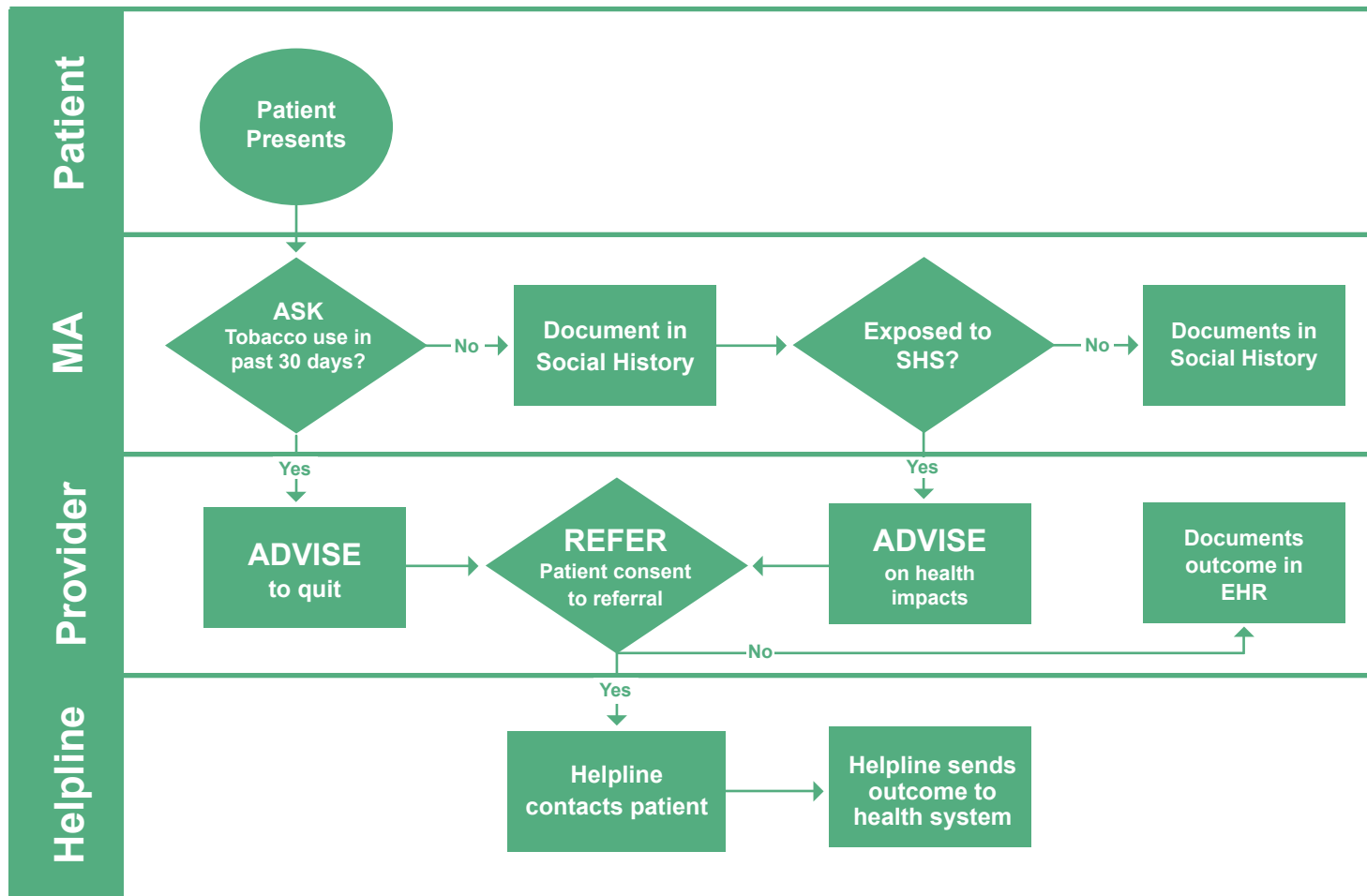
Referral Options

Referring patients to tobacco cessation resources can help relieve the burden on time-constrained clinicians to offer counseling and support to their patients. By connecting patients to additional services, you are helping them in their quit attempt. Health systems may currently have support systems in place or can look to external resources for support.

Internal/External Referral Options

Internal: A provider submits a referral to internal resources, such as a health education class, behavioral health or pharmacy staff, chronic disease management program, etc. to provide tobacco cessation services.

Some health systems and organizations have specialized staff to provide tobacco cessation counseling services. For staff interested in additional training, there are several opportunities and fees may apply.

- National Certificate in Tobacco Treatment Practice (NCTTP)
  - Completion of an accredited program course
  - Conduct required hours of tobacco treatment practice
  - Pass an exam
  - Click here for more information on how to become a NCTTP
- American Lung Association's Freedom from Smoking Facilitator Training (non-certified): Link
  - Register to complete 3 training modules online, and a 3-hour live web-based Facilitator Skill Builder Workshop
  - Training costs may apply
  - Individual will be certified to lead Freedom from Smoking sessions and group activities

External: A clinician, staff member, or referral coordinator, offers referral options to external resources for tobacco cessation support. External resources include:

- California Smokers' Helpline
- Local county programs
- Online Support Services (e.g. smokefree.gov, becomeanex.org)

California Smokers' Helpline

The California Smokers' Helpline provides free tobacco counseling services in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese. The Helpline's highly-trained counselors help patients develop a quit plan and is proven to double quit rates. Helpline services are available for vape users, tobacco chewers, pregnant smokers, and teens aged 13 and older (no parent or guardian permission needed).

The Helpline provides a variety of cessation services: (download flyer)

- Telephone counseling
- Text messaging
- Mobile apps
- Amazon Alexa skills
- Self-help booklet and materials
- County cessation program listings
- Nicotine patches (if eligible)

Provider options to integrate an electronic referral: (download flyer)

Connect with the Helpline to have your patient contacted in a couple business days. The Helpline will make up to 5 attempts to reach your patient. Service outcome results for individuals or total referrals can be available.

- Web-based portal
- DIRECT messaging
- Peer to peer (HL7 interface)
- Health information exchange

TIP Referrals do not need a physician. Tell patients the Helpline will contact them within two business days.

Medications & Pharmacists

Evidence-based tobacco treatment includes a combination of medications and behavioral counseling interventions. Due to nicotine's strong addictive properties, medications can help reduce nicotine withdrawal symptoms and cravings for patients while they work on behavior change. The FDA has approved **7 medications** for tobacco cessation, which may be used in combination (e.g. long-acting nicotine patch with a short-acting gum or lozenge).
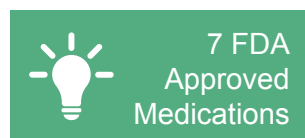
7 FDA Approved Medications

- Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) includes patch, gum, lozenge, nasal spray and inhaler
- Chantix (varenicline) and Zyban (buproprion)

For information about each of the 7 FDA-approved medications and respective dosing, view the Rx for Change Pharmacologic Product Guide

For information on nicotine dosing for vaping products, view the The Pharmacist's Letter Vaping Cessation Guide

E-Cigarettes are NOT a Cessation Device

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not approved e-cigarettes or other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) for the purposes of tobacco cessation. To learn more, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) issued a recommendation statement on smoking cessation.

Pharmacists Can Furnish Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Pharmacists in your health care system or community may help furnish NRT without a physician's prescription. They can also counsel on smoking cessation. Pharmacists need to complete a minimum of 2 hours (every 2 years) of approved California Pharmacist Association continuing education.

1. California Smokers' Helpline Pharmacist Factsheet Overview
2. California Board of Pharmacy Protocol for Pharmacists Furnishing Nicotine Replacement Products

TIP For teenagers 13 and older, Medi-Cal plans do cover nicotine replacement therapy prescriptions.

3. DHCS AB 1114 Pharmacist Services FAQ on billing for counseling

Additional Resources

Healthcare Systems and Providers

American Lung Association's Lung Mind Alliance Resources

California Department of Health Care Services

California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center: Tobacco Cessation

California Smokers' Helpline

Centers for Disease Control Program Smoking & Tobacco Use Clinical Tools

Centers for Disease Control Program Million Hearts Tobacco Cessation Change Package

DHCS All-Plan Letter for Comprehensive Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Services

Tobacco Free CA: Public Website of the California Tobacco Control Program

UCSF Smoking Cessation Leadership Center

Patient Education and Print Materials

California Smokers' Helpline Patient Resource List

California Smokers' Helpline Free Print & Downloadable Materials

Tobacco Education Clearinghouse of California

Acknowledgement