

Medicaid Coverage for Tobacco Dependence Treatments

Background

An estimated 41 million people in the United States receive health insurance coverage through Medicaid, a program that helps low-income individuals and families get the health care they need.¹ Coverage of tobacco dependence treatments and services for Medicaid enrollees varies from state to state—no two state programs are the same, meaning that access to proven cessation treatments and services varies among Medicaid clients across the country. Working with states to increase Medicaid coverage of treatments and services, and promoting these services to Medicaid beneficiaries, are critical, necessary steps for helping to eliminate tobacco disparities.

Smokers and Medicaid

Smokers make up a significant percentage of Medicaid clients. In 2004, approximately 29% of the adult Medicaid enrollees were current smokers.² Smoking prevalence among Medicaid clients is 39% higher than the rest of the U.S. population, making them disproportionately affected by tobacco disease and disability.³

Coverage and access to evidence-based cessation treatments and services varies among the Medicaid population in United States. The most recent data from 2005 show that:

- 38 state programs, including the District of Columbia, offer coverage for at least one form of tobacco-dependence medication for all Medicaid clients.
- One additional state, Washington, offers Zyban to pregnant women only.
- 14 states offer some form of cessation counseling.
- An additional 12 states offer counseling for pregnant women only.
- Altogether, nine states did not offer any form of tobacco treatment coverage to Medicaid clients; another four states offered coverage only to pregnant women.

- Only one state, Oregon, covered all medications approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for cessation and all three forms of counseling recommended by the Public Health Service (PHS) Clinical Practice Guidelines.⁴

A national objective of Healthy People 2010 is to increase insurance coverage among all 51 state Medicaid programs.⁵

Many Medicaid smokers are unaware of the financial and medical assistance they can receive to help them quit. Increasing awareness of coverage benefits among Medicaid enrollees can help maximize the appeal, demand and use for smoking cessation services.

Less than half (46%) of Medicaid enrolled smokers or recent quitters knew that their state Medicaid program covered at least one tobacco dependent treatment, and only 40% of those surveyed were aware of their state's quitline.⁶ Use of quitlines among Medicaid clients varies greatly from 3% to 40% of total calls, depending on the state.⁷

TABLE 1. State Medicaid program coverage of tobacco-dependence treatments,* by type of coverage and year coverage began — United States, 2005[†]

Area	Year any coverage began [§]	Medication coverage					Counseling coverage		
		Gum	Patch	Nasal spray	Inhaler	Zyban [®] /bupropion hydrochloride ¹	Group	Individual	Telephone
Arizona	1997	—	—	—	—	Yes**	—	Yes (P) ^{††}	—
Arkansas	1999	Yes ^{§§}	Yes ^{§§}	—	—	Yes	—	Yes ^{§§}	—
California	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	— ^{¶¶}
Colorado	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (P)	Yes (P)	—
Delaware	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
District of Columbia	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	Yes	—	—	—
Florida	1997	Yes	Yes	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
Hawaii	1999	Yes**	Yes**	Yes**	Yes**	Yes**	—	—	—
Illinois	2000	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
Indiana	1999	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
Iowa	Unknown*** (P)	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes (P)	—
Kansas	1999	—	Yes	—	—	Yes	—	—	—
Kentucky	2001 (P)	—	—	—	—	—	Yes (P)	Yes (P)	—
Louisiana	1990	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
Maine	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	Yes	—
Maryland	1996	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	Yes (P) ^{†††}	—
Massachusetts	Unknown*** (P)	—	—	—	—	—	—	Yes (P)	—
Michigan	1997	Yes	Yes	—	—	Yes	—	—	—
Minnesota	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
Mississippi	2001	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (P)	Yes (P)	—
Montana	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
Nevada	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
New Hampshire	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (P)	Yes (P)	—
New Jersey	1996	—	—	—	—	Yes	—	—	—
New Mexico	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (P)	Yes (P)	—
New York	1999	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—
North Carolina	1996	Yes ^{§§§}	Yes ^{§§§}	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
North Dakota	1996	Yes	Yes	—	—	Yes	Yes ^{§§}	Yes	—
Ohio	1998	Yes	Yes	—	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
Oklahoma	1999	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
Oregon	1998	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	2002	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—
Rhode Island	1994	Yes ^{§§§}	Yes ^{§§§}	Yes ^{§§§}	Yes ^{§§§}	—	Yes	Yes	—
South Carolina	1995	Yes ^{§§}	Yes ^{§§}	Yes ^{§§}	Yes ^{§§}	Yes ^{§§}	Yes (P) ^{†††}	Yes (P) ^{†††}	—
South Dakota	2001	—	—	—	—	Yes	—	—	—
Texas	1996	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
Utah	2001	Yes ^{§§}	Yes	Yes (P)	Yes (P)	Yes	Yes (P)	Yes (P)	Yes
Vermont	1999	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	—	—
Virginia	1996	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes (P)	Yes (P)	—
Washington	2002 (P)	—	—	—	—	Yes (P)	—	Yes (P)	—
West Virginia	2000	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	—	Yes	Yes
Wisconsin	1996	—	—	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ^{§§§†††}	Yes ^{†††}	—
All Medicaid	—	31	33	28	28	36	10	12	3
Pregnant only	—	0	0	1	1	1	8	13	0
Total (N = 42)	—	31	33	29	29	37	18	25	3
Added since 2003	—	5	4	2	2	1	3	2	0
Dropped since 2003	—	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1

* On the basis of response to the question, "Does your state Medicaid program cover any of the following tobacco-dependence treatments?" Each state also was asked to provide documentation regarding the year each covered treatment was first offered.
[†] N = 42. In 2005, a total of nine states with Medicaid programs (Alabama, Alaska, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Missouri, Nebraska, Tennessee, and Wyoming) covered none of the tobacco-dependence treatments recommended in the 2000 Public Health Service clinical practice guideline (3).
[§] Year any coverage began might differ from that listed in previous reports because earlier coverage might have existed for Wellbutrin[®] (chemically comparable to Zyban but approved for treatment of depression). Although providers might have used Wellbutrin to treat smokers, only generic bupropion and Zyban are approved by the Food and Drug Administration for smoking-cessation treatment. Years of initiation coverage were changed to reflect this. However, the survey did not collect data on when coverage began for generic bupropion specifically for smoking cessation.
[¶] For smoking cessation only. Three states (Georgia, Maine, and Wyoming) covered bupropion hydrochloride but not Zyban. These data are not included because coverage might not be specifically for smoking cessation.
^{**} If medically necessary.
^{††} P = Medicaid coverage exclusively for pregnant women.
^{§§} Treatment added in 2004.
^{¶¶} Some managed care plans might provide proactive telephone counseling.
^{***} State does not have any documentation or knowledge regarding the year coverage began.
^{†††} Counseling indicated is not specific to tobacco-cessation counseling.
^{§§§} Treatment added in 2005.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State Medicaid Coverage for Tobacco-Dependence Treatments—United States, 2005. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2006; 55(44):1194-1197 (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5544a2.htm>)

- ¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State Medicaid Coverage for Tobacco-Dependence Treatments—United States, 2005. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2006; 55(44):1194-1197.
- ² Lethbridge-Cejku M, Rose D, Vickerie J. Summary health statistics for U.S. adults: National Health Interview Survey, 2004. National center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Stat 10; 2006.
- ³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State Medicaid Coverage for Tobacco-Dependence Treatments—United States, 2005. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2006; 55(44):1194-1197.
- ⁴ Halpin HA, Bellows NM, McMenamin SB. Medicaid coverage for tobacco-dependence treatments. Health Aff 2006;25:550–6.
- ⁵ US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2010, 2nd ed. With understanding and improving health and objectives for improving health (2 vols). Washington, DC: US Department of Health and Human Services, 2000.
- ⁶ McMenamin SB, Halpin HA, Bellows NM. Knowledge of Medicaid Coverage and Effectiveness of Smoking Treatments. Am J Prev Med 2006;31(5).
- ⁷ North American Quitline Consortium. NAQC 2006 Medicaid Information Survey (U.S.). March 2007. http://www.naquitline.org/newsletter/Fact_Sheet_2006_Medicaid_Survey.pdf