



Tobacco Cessation Coverage: Standard Medicaid

What is Standard Medicaid?

Standard Medicaid is a federal-state partnership that provides health coverage to many low-income families, including parents, children, elderly individuals, people with disabilities, and pregnant women. The program is administered by the states, has federally mandated requirements and is funded jointly by the states and federal government¹.

Standard Medicaid coverage can be provided to patients through a traditional fee-for-service plan or through private companies commonly referred to as Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). Coverage requirements are the same regardless of enrollment in either program.

Tobacco Cessation and Standard Medicaid:

Medicaid enrollees smoke at a rate of 28.6%², almost three times that of people with private insurance. Although a comprehensive tobacco cessation benefit is recommended in the guideline, actual coverage varies by state. What is required to be covered under the program is outlined below.

Counseling³

- There is no federal requirement that state Medicaid programs cover counseling.
- Some state Medicaid programs require counseling coverage.
- Preventive and rehabilitative services can be provided by non-licensed practitioners, provided the state has amended their state plan. States may establish specific qualifications for providers under these standards⁴.

Medication

- Tobacco cessation medications are no longer excludable from Medicaid coverage⁵. Plans should cover all seven medications, but coverage varies by state.
- NRT Inhaler, NRT Nasal Spray, NRT Patch, NRT Gum, NRT Lozenge, Bupropion/ Zyban, Varenicline (Chantix)
- Some of these medications are over-the-counter or OTC, meaning a patient does not need a prescription to purchase the medication. However, patients need a prescription for any medication, including OTC, in order for the health plan to cover the treatment.
- States can require Medicaid Managed Care plans to cover all seven medications.
- State Medicaid programs are allowed to impose barriers including cost-sharing, prior authorization, and stepped care therapy.

Pregnant Women and Medicaid

- State Medicaid⁶ programs are required to cover a comprehensive benefit for pregnant women, including all forms of counseling and pharmacotherapy (medications), without cost-sharing.

Comprehensive Cessation Benefit:

Seven Medications:

NRT Gum (OTC)* | NRT Patch (OTC)
NRT Lozenge (OTC) | NRT Inhaler
NRT Nasal Spray | Bupropion / Zyban
Varenicline (Chantix)

Three Forms of Counseling:

Individual | Group | Phone

¹ <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/prescription-drugs/index.html>

² 28.6% and include: Tobacco Product Use Among Adults — United States, 2020 | MMWR (cdc.gov)

³ <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/improvement-initiatives/tobacco/index.html>

⁴ <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/benefits/downloads/tobacco-webinar-july-9.pdf>

⁵ <http://downloads.cms.gov/cmsgov/archived-downloads/SMDL/downloads/SMD11-007.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/quality-of-care/improvement-initiatives/tobacco/index.html>

* Over the Counter or OTC; meaning a patient does not need a prescription to purchase the medication. However, in order for the health plan to cover the cost a prescription must be written, even for OTC medications.