

# **Help Employees Stop Tobacco Use: Decreased Stigma and Aided Quit Attempts**

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# Partnership Goals

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- > **Tobacco is still a big health issue, and WA state employees have access to evidence-based support**
  - Disparity between highest and lowest income groups
- > **Promotion of these supports in the workplace can lead to:**
  - An increase in assisted quit attempts
  - A reduction in disparities of use

# Findings, Year 1

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- > **Surveyed 2,625 employees from 6 state agencies**
  - 16% tobacco use, highest in DOC, DOT, and L&I
  - 51% knowledge of cessation benefits offered
  - 74% agreed their agency should actively promote benefits
- > **6 focus groups with managers**
  - Supportive but not knowledgeable of cessation benefits
  - Agreed more could be done

# Findings, Year 2

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- > **15 interviews with wellness coordinators and health promoters**
  - Recommended more regular communication and leadership
  - Tobacco use seen as challenging to address due to stigma
  - Lack of capacity to implement program and policy changes
  - Feedback on how best to communicate about these issues

# Findings, Year 3

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- > Spoke with regional wellness coordinators to get a more detailed look at what promotion looks like
- > Looked at NRT and Varenicline use over a three-year period to get a baseline prior to engaging more outreach
  - Use levels good overall, 15% to 20%
    - > Big drop in Varenicline use (2021 to 2022), but NRT use stable

# Going Forward

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- > Continuing to connect with wellness coordinators at DOT, DOC, and L&I to increase outreach and awareness
- > Looking at NRT and Varenicline data, Quitline data to see if this is working
- > Increasing interagency communication

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AND NOW,

How to destigmatize communications about tobacco cessation

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Comprehensive Cancer Control Program Coordinator

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Washington State Department of Health



# DOES IT HELP SMOKERS IF WE STIGMATIZE THEM?



# Stigmatization Leads To

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- Emotional, cognitive, and attitudinal reactions that make them less likely to quit.<sup>1</sup>
- Prevent smokers from consulting doctors.<sup>2</sup>
- Social Isolation.<sup>2</sup>
- Perception of “deep divide” between smokers and non-smokers.<sup>2</sup>
- Some smokers do not announce quit attempts in advance, in part to avoid stigma associated with failure.<sup>3</sup>
- While evidence is limited, stigma may reduce willingness to truthfully report smoking or to seek treatment for smoking-associated illnesses.<sup>3</sup>

# Who still smokes?

Approximately 10.8% of Washington residents.

Disproportionately higher rates of tobacco use exist among people who identify as:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native (30.3%)
- Black (15.9%)
- LGBTQ+ (16.9%)
- Medicaid (27.1%)
- Annual income of less than \$35,000 (21.8%)
- Poor physical health (21.1%)
- Poor mental health (21.6%)
- Heavily drink (23.2%)
- Disability (19.5%)

Data: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) 2020 Data

# Effective and Sustainable Support

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- Acknowledge the challenges.
- Enhance communication efforts.
  - Frame with empathy.
  - Prioritize audience.
  - Use culturally and linguistically appropriate materials.
- Reminder: this is not a moral failure; people are motivated to quit.<sup>1</sup>
  - Ask yourself: What barriers are they experiencing? How can we reduce them?

# Communication Is Key

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- Remember, it's hard to quit.
- What is your relationship to this person?
- Is there an opening?
- Don't lecture.
- Be patient and positive.

## Let's Practice

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Choose one person to be respondent  
and one person to act as tobacco user.

Prompt:

“My doctor really wants me to quit but it feels impossible.”

# Let's Practice

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Prompt:

"My doctor really wants me to quit but it feels impossible."

Examples:

"Quitting will be hard, but I know you can do it. Have you set a quit date?"

"You're not in this alone. Even if it gets tough, I'll be here for you."

"Quitting is the best thing I ever did! Let me know if you need any tips."

# Let's Practice

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- Prompt:  
“I tried to quit but I just couldn't get it to stick.”

## Let's Practice

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### Prompt:

"I tried to quit but I just couldn't get it to stick."

### Examples:

- "Slips happen. Don't beat yourself up over it! Like anything tough, you learn as you go. Use right now as a time to restart and get back on track."
- "So you slipped. Quitting isn't easy and many people need several tries before they quit for good. You've got this, and I'm here for you."
- "Let's talk about what's triggering you to smoke. That will help you stay on track this time. Just don't smoke that next cigarette!"



# Reminders for Conversation

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Put yourself in their shoes, seek to understand

Ensure it is a good time and location

Remain realistic and curious

Be calm and patient, listen to their barriers

The first conversation should be brief, you are planting seeds

Open the door for ongoing conversations

Ask how it makes them feel?

Did they expect to get hooked?

What do they think about the cost of tobacco?

# 2023 Tobacco Cessation Resources

Washington Wellness



**When in doubt,  
You can refer everyone to:**

**Washington State Department of Health**

**Tobacco Quitline**

**1-800-QUIT-NOW**

toll-free

1-800-784-8669

**QUITLINE.COM**

# Tobacco Cessation Resources

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- > State law requires health plans to cover preventive services, which include tobacco cessation services
- > In addition to screening for tobacco use – providers should be able to bill for the following services without prior authorization and cost to their client, at least twice per year, per client:
  - Four counseling sessions
  - A 90-day supply of FDA-approved cessation medications

# General Tobacco Cessation Resources

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- > **Promotional Guide and Toolkits**
  - [ADAI Clearinghouse - DOH Washington State Quitline Digital Assets](#)
- > **Coverage by Insurance Status**
  - [Current Coverage, by Insurance Status \(wa.gov\)](#)
- > **Other Digital Resources**
  - [Digital Interventions: Washington State Department of Health](#)
- > **Washington State Quitline and Quit for Life**
  - [Health Portal \(quitnow.net\)](#)

# Living Tobacco Free: Uniform Medical Plan (PEBB & SEBB)

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▶ Uniform Medical Plan offers the following tobacco cessation support:

- Quit for Life tobacco cessation program
- Nicotine replacement therapy
- Counseling

▶ Call customer service with specific questions:

▶ **Phone:** 1-888-849-3681 (TRS: 711)

**Hours:** Monday through Friday: 5 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Pacific)

# Living Tobacco Free: Kaiser WA (PEBB & SEBB)

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▶ Kaiser Permanente WA offers the following tobacco cessation support:

- Quit for Life tobacco cessation program
- Counseling

▶ Call customer service with specific questions:

▶ **Phone:** 1-866-648-1928 (TTY: 1-800-833-6388)

**Hours:** Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Pacific Time

# Living Tobacco Free: Kaiser NW (PEBB & SEBB)

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• Kaiser Permanente NW offers the following tobacco cessation support:

- Digital coaching

- Take the Total Health Assessment to get started.
- Learn more about healthy lifestyle programs.

- Wellness coaching by phone

Call customer service with specific questions:

**Phone:** 1-800-813-2000 (TRS: 711)

**Hours:** Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Pacific Time.



# Living Tobacco Free: Premera (SEBB)

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- ▶ Premera Blue Cross offers the following tobacco cessation support:
  - Preventive coverage for services, prescription medications, and over-the-counter medications. Consult with your physician for their recommendations.
  
- ▶ Call customer service with specific questions:
- ▶ **Phone:** 1-800-807-7310 (TTY: 711)  
**Hours:** Monday through Friday 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. Pacific Time

# Department of Health Resources

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Washington State Tobacco Quitline

Cognitive behavioral therapy

Counseling + medication

1-800-QUIT-NOW / [quitline.com](http://quitline.com)

Uninsured & underinsured benefit

Medicaid/commercial benefits

Live Vape Free

Physical, psychological & behavioral health science

Online learning and support

[myquitforlife.comLVFWA](http://myquitforlife.comLVFWA)

Free for parents and caregivers

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# Department of Health Resources (cont.)

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2Morrow Health Smartphone app  
Acceptance & Commitment  
Therapy

[doh.wa.gov/quit](http://doh.wa.gov/quit)

Free to all Washingtonians  
Vaping app for teens & young  
adults



This is Quitting (TIQ)  
Text-to-quit vaping program  
Helps motivate, inspire, and  
support during the quitting  
process

Truth Initiative

Free for young people ages 13-24

# Teen Resource

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## ▶ Smokefree Teen

- Text messaging program
  - Quit start app
  - Offers information and tools
  - Strategies for tackling cravings, bad moods and other triggering situations
- ▶ If a dependent (age 17 and under) enrolled on your PEBB and SEBB medical coverage uses tobacco products, contact your medical plan for programs they offer.



# Promotional Toolkits and Resources

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- ▶ Living Tobacco Free for PEBB

<https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/washington-wellness/living-tobacco-free-pebb>

- ▶ Living Tobacco Free for SEBB

<https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/washington-wellness/living-tobacco-free-sebb>

- ▶ Workplace Health – Tobacco Cessation

<https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/tools-resources/workplace>

- ▶ Fast Facts and Fact Sheets

[https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/index.htm)

# Thank you!

Washington State  
Health Care Authority

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# Questions and Answers

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# Contact us

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[hca.wa.gov/washington-wellness](https://hca.wa.gov/washington-wellness)



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