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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Support Smoking Cessation Treatment for Medicaid Clients HB 5411: An Act Concerning Medicaid

46 states in the United States provide smoking cessation treatment services for Medicaid clients. These programs improve public health, save lives, and provide significant savings in health care costs. Coverage for smoking cessation treatment under Medicaid is long overdue in our state, and the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health strongly supports passage of HB 5411: An Act Concerning Medicaid.

- Tobacco use remains the number one cause of preventable illness and death in the United States. Cigarette smoking is responsible for 1 in 5 of all deaths, or 443,000 deaths each year.
- While the prevalence of tobacco use among adults in Connecticut has decreased to 16%, Medicaid enrollees continue to smoke at over twice the rate of the general population (36%).
- The Connecticut Medicaid program spent \$507 million on health care costs associated with smoking in 2008. These costs were primarily borne by Connecticut taxpayers.
- Smoking cessation is effective. On average, 27.6% of smokers who receive both counseling and medications are able to quit.
- Smoking cessation significantly reduces morbidity and mortality. Former smokers reduce their risk of developing coronary heart disease by 50% within one year of quitting.
- Smoking cessation is a top-ranked clinical preventive service in terms of cost-effectiveness. It is more cost-effective than mammography, colon cancer screening, Pap tests, treatment of mild to moderate hypertension, and treatment of high cholesterol. The estimated cost per life-year saved is \$2,000 for smoking cessation compared with \$50,000 per life-year saved for breast cancer mammography.
- Medicaid cessation is a proven success. Massachusetts offers a Medicaid cessation benefit. Over a two-year study period, the group smoking rate fell from 38% to 28%. Those who quit showed significant reductions in hospitalizations for heart attacks, emergency department visits for asthma, and adverse maternal birth complications.

Connecticut is one of only four states that do not cover smoking cessation treatment for its Medicaid recipients. Smoking cessation treatment has proven to offer both public health and economic benefits. We urge passage of HB 5411: An Act Concerning Medicaid.