

- MEMORANDUM -

DATE: October 4, 2022

TO: All Alameda County Behavioral Health (ACBH) Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Programs

FROM: Torfeh Rejali, Quality Assurance Administrator *Torfeh Rejali*
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SUBJECT: **Assessment of Tobacco Use Disorder in SUD Recovery or Treatment Facilities**

This memorandum announces tobacco assessment requirements for all ACBH SUD providers at the time of intake and actions providers need to take when a tobacco use disorder has been identified. The requirements specified in this memo are the result of California State Assembly Bill (AB) 541, described in Behavioral Health Information Notice (BHIN) 22-024. These requirements went into effect on July 1, 2022.

New Requirements

AB 541 requires all licensed and/or certified SUD recovery or treatment facilities to assess beneficiary tobacco use at the time of initial intake. If tobacco use is identified, providers are required to:

1. Provide information to the beneficiary on how continued use of tobacco products could affect their long-term success in recovery from SUD.
2. Recommend treatment for tobacco use disorder in the treatment plan (for services that require a treatment plan).
3. Offer either treatment, subject to the limitation of the license or certification issued by the department, or a referral for treatment for tobacco use disorder.

For programs that use the Clinician's Gateway (CG) *Intake & Assessment* form, there is a tobacco use assessment embedded in that form. For programs that do not use CG, ACBH and Lifelong/EBCRP have partnered to develop a one-page tobacco screening and assessment tool that may be used to meet this requirement (see attachment). Providers may utilize other tobacco assessment or screening tools as long as they meet the requirements specified by AB 541 / BHIN 22-024.

Note that a tobacco use disorder alone does not meet access criteria requirements for DMC-ODS services. Beneficiaries receiving SUD services must meet the criteria for at least one non-tobacco DSM-5 SUD diagnosis. SUD providers must assess all beneficiaries for tobacco use disorder and may provide treatment as a non-primary SUD diagnosis.

Resources

Medications for the treatment of tobacco use disorder, including nicotine replacement, are covered by Medi-Cal and reimbursed through the Medi-Cal Pharmacy Benefit when prescribed by licensed medical staff. To learn more about Medi-Cal coverage of tobacco cessation medications and counseling, please see Appendix M: Funding Reimbursement for Tobacco Cessation Services, page 56 of the CABHWI Toolkit.





The following are some resources to support your program in the effort to screen and treat tobacco use disorder:

- Licensed and certified SUD recovery or treatment facilities may refer clients to [Kick It California](#) (formerly the California Smokers' Helpline). This site offers referral options, as well as recorded webinars and other educational materials for providers, and information about setting up a referral system within a clinic's electronic health record.
- [Tobacco Treatment Training](#) – This program is funded by ACBH and Tobacco Control to provide specialized clinical staff training. They offer evidence-based clinical skill-building training on how to address and treat tobacco-use dependence, including basic tobacco education as it pertains to co-occurring conditions, motivational interviewing techniques, and tobacco cessation counseling and medication protocols. Technical assistance, as well as assistance related to tobacco policy implementation, is also provided.
- [Alameda County Smoking Cessation Resources](#)
- [California Behavioral Health & Wellness Initiative Smoking Cessation Leadership Center \(ucsf.edu\)](#)

Action Required

Please share this information with your teams as appropriate and begin incorporating this assessment into your initial intake process, effective immediately.

ACBH Support

We welcome questions and opportunities for clarification of this change. SUD Brown Bags are scheduled every third Thursday of the month from 12 to 1 PM. If you do not have the meeting already on your calendar, please contact QATA@acgov.org for more information.

Additionally, you can send your questions to QATA@acgov.org.

