



Healthcare Systems Toolkit

A guide to integrate tobacco/nicotine treatment into health systems.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of mortality, and health systems play an important role in tobacco/nicotine treatment. As California still has about 3 million smokers, CA Quits is a statewide initiative to facilitate health systems change with tobacco/nicotine treatment across providers, plans, and public health partners. To generate collective impact on tobacco/nicotine treatment, CA Quits hosts learning collaboratives for providers and workgroups for Medi-Cal plans and public health partners. Kick It California, the state quitline, is a key partner providing tobacco/nicotine treatment services.

Toolkit Highlights

This toolkit offers key elements for integrating tobacco/nicotine assessment and counseling practices using a brief intervention framework. Healthcare professionals and staff may use this to help with quality metrics or clinical services. Public health partners may use this to complement policy or program efforts. Please contact us for more information and discussion.

- **Ask, Advise, Refer**

- **Policy & Procedure**

- **Referral Systems**

- **Medications & Pharmacists**

For additional guidance or technical assistance, contact the CA Quits team. For more information, visit the [CA Quits website](#).

Tobacco/Nicotine Treatment Framework

The “5 As” (*Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist, and Arrange*) is the gold standard for tobacco/nicotine treatment.

A brief intervention, *Ask, Advise, Refer* takes only 3 minutes to connect for help with “*Assess, Assist, and Arrange.*”

Ask

- **Goal:** Ask about tobacco use at every visit.
- **Tip:** Ask about all tobacco/nicotine products, not just smoking.
- **Script:** *“Have you ever used tobacco or nicotine products?”*

Advise

- **Goal:** Advice from a health professional can increase quit attempts.
- **Tip:** Quitting tobacco improves overall health and there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.
- **Script:** *“Quitting is one of the best things you can do for your health and others. There are 7 FDA-approved medications to help you quit, including nicotine medications or pills, that are covered by most insurance, including Medi-Cal.”*

Refer/Connect

- **Goal:** Make [electronic referrals](#) to connect your patients with Kick It California
- **Tip:** Additional clinic support staff can submit or pend a referral.
- **Script:** *“Kick It California is our free state quitline. Their coaches can help you with a free quit plan and information. They also may have special offers. Can I have them call you?”*

[Ask, Advise, Refer clinician script flyer \(PDF\)](#)

[Tobacco and E-Cigarette/Vaping patient history questionnaire \(PDF\)](#)

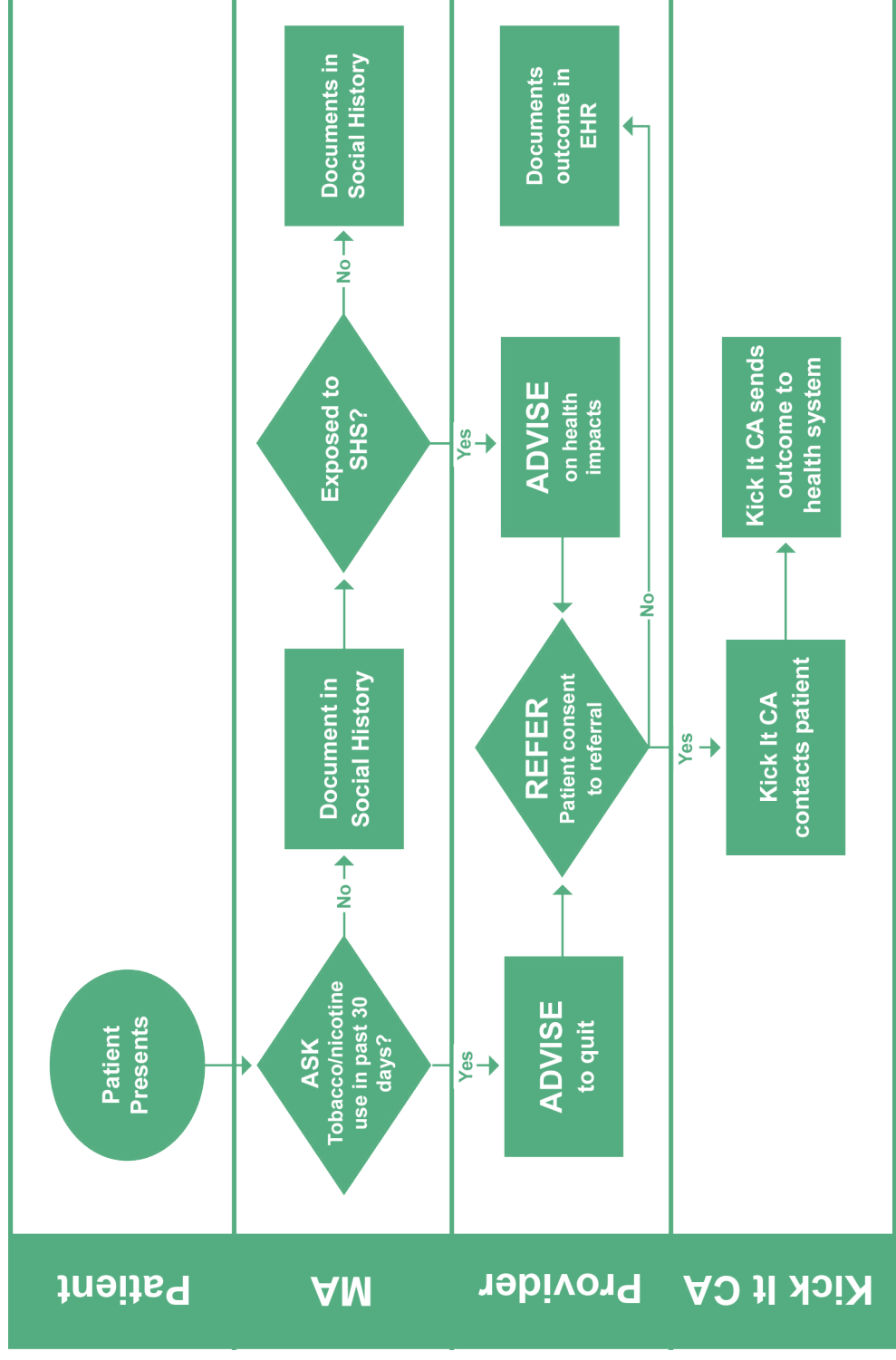
Putting Policies in Place

Addressing tobacco/nicotine assessment and treatment in health care systems includes setting policies at the organizational and provider levels. Feedback from all staff is important when assessing the current workflow for strengths and gaps, and where improvements can be made. Implementation support may be available with your local public health partners or Medi-Cal managed care plan health education teams.

Here are four things you can incorporate outside and inside the health care system:

- 1. 100% Smoke and tobacco-free campus policy** ([sample policy](#))
 - **Purpose:** To protect the health and well-being of staff, patients and visitors by reducing secondhand smoke exposure.
 - **Benefit:** To encourage an environmental standard for staff, patients, and visitors not to use tobacco products.
- 2. Tobacco/nicotine assessment and treatment policy** ([sample policy](#))
 - **Purpose:** To identify the roles and responsibilities for staff and describe available treatment resources.
 - **Benefit:** To assist staff and leadership with knowledge and training which provides a basis for quality improvement.
- 3. Process map of workflows** ([see variety of templates](#))
 - **Purpose:** To create a visual aid of staff roles and responsibilities and treatment/nicotine resources in relation to a patient encounter.
 - **Benefit:** To help map staff roles and workflow processes for quick reference, including population health management.
- 4. Care gap strategy for tobacco assessment and treatment** ([see flyer for population health strategies](#))
 - **Purpose:** To identify procedures for population health teams to implement care gap strategies for tobacco assessment and treatment.
 - **Benefit:** Health systems can implement care gap strategies to align with patient care and tobacco quality measures.

An example of a Swimlane



Referral Options

Referring patients to tobacco/nicotine cessation resources can help relieve the burden on time-constrained clinicians to offer counseling and support to their patients. By connecting patients to additional services, you are helping them in their quit attempt. Health systems may currently have support systems in place or can look to external resources for support.

Internal/External Referral Options

Internal: A provider submits a referral to internal resources, such as a health education class, behavioral health or pharmacy staff, chronic disease management program, etc. to provide tobacco/nicotine cessation services.

Some health systems and organizations have specialized staff to provide tobacco/nicotine cessation counseling services. For staff interested in additional training, there are several opportunities and fees may apply.

- National Certification in Nicotine and Tobacco Treatment (NCNTT)
 - Completion of an accredited program course
 - Conduct required hours of tobacco/nicotine treatment practice
 - Pass an exam
 - [Click here](#) for more information on how to become a NCNTT
- American Lung Association's Freedom from Smoking Facilitator Training (non-certified): [Link](#)
 - Register to complete 3 training modules online, and a 3-hour live web-based Facilitator Skill Builder Workshop
 - Training costs may apply
 - Individual will be certified to lead Freedom from Smoking sessions and group activities

External: A clinician, staff member, or referral coordinator, offers referral options to external resources for tobacco/nicotine cessation support. External resources include:

- [Kick It California](#)
- Your [local county programs](#)
- Online Support Services (e.g. [smokefree.gov](#), [becomeanex.org](#))

Kick It California

[Kick It California](#) provides free tobacco/nicotine counseling services in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese. Kick It California's highly-trained counselors help patients develop a quit plan and is proven to double quit rates. Kick It California services are available for vape users, tobacco chewers, pregnant people, and teens aged 13 and older (no parent or guardian permission needed).

Kick It California provides a variety of cessation services: [\(download flyer\)](#)

- Telephone counseling
- Text messaging
- [Mobile apps](#)
- Amazon Alexa skills
- Self-help booklet and materials
- County cessation program [listings](#)
- Nicotine patches (if eligible)

Provider options to integrate an electronic referral: [\(Click here for link\)](#)

Connect with Kick It California to have your patient contacted in a couple business days. Kick It California will make up to 5 attempts to reach your patient. Service outcome results for individuals or total referrals can be available.

- [Web-based portal](#)
- DIRECT messaging
- Peer to peer (HL7 interface)
- Health information exchange

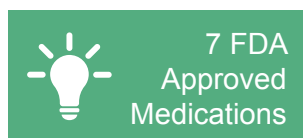


TIP

Web-based referrals do not need a physician. Tell patients Kick It CA will contact them within two business days.

Medications & Pharmacists

Evidence-based tobacco/nicotine treatment includes a combination of medications and behavioral counseling interventions. Due to nicotine's strong addictive properties, medications can help reduce nicotine withdrawal symptoms and cravings for patients while they work on behavior change. The FDA has approved [7 medications for tobacco/nicotine cessation](#), which may be used in combination (e.g. long-acting nicotine patch with a short-acting gum or lozenge).



7 FDA
Approved
Medications

- Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) includes patch, gum, lozenge, nasal spray and inhaler
- Chantix (varenicline) and Zyban (bupropion SR)

For information about each of the 7 FDA-approved medications and respective dosing, view the [Rx for Change Pharmacologic Product Guide](#)

For information on nicotine dosing for vaping products, view [The Pharmacist's Letter Vaping Cessation Guide](#)

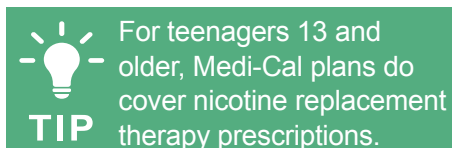
E-Cigarettes are **NOT** a Cessation Device

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not approved e-cigarettes or other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) for the purposes of tobacco/nicotine cessation. To learn more, the [U.S. Preventive Services Task Force \(USPSTF\)](#) issued a recommendation statement on smoking cessation.

Pharmacists Can Furnish Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Pharmacists in your health care system or community may help furnish NRT without a physician's prescription. They can also counsel on smoking cessation. Pharmacists need to complete a minimum of 2 hours (every 2 years) of approved California Pharmacist Association [continuing education](#).

1. [Kick It California Pharmacist Factsheet Overview](#)
2. [California Board of Pharmacy Protocol for Pharmacists Furnishing Nicotine Replacement Products](#)
3. [Collaborative Practice Agreements and Pharmacists' Patient Care Services](#)
4. Visit [quitsmokingpharmacies.com](#) to find local community pharmacy support



TIP

For teenagers 13 and older, Medi-Cal plans do cover nicotine replacement therapy prescriptions.

Additional Resources

The following resources support tobacco/nicotine cessation across healthcare systems, providers, and patient populations, including maternal, child, and adolescent health.

Healthcare Systems and Providers

[American Lung Association Lung Mind Alliance Resources](#)

[California Department of Health Care Services](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Million Hearts Tobacco Cessation Change Package](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Smoking and Tobacco Use Clinical Tools](#)

[Department of Health Care Services \(DHCS\) All-Plan Letter for Comprehensive Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Services](#)

[Kick It California](#)

[California Tobacco Prevention Program \(CTPP\) – Undo.org](#)

[University of California, San Francisco \(UCSF\) California Oral Health Technical Assistance Center](#)

[University of California, San Francisco \(UCSF\) Smoking Cessation Leadership Center](#)

Patient Education and Print Materials

[Kick It California Free Print and Downloadable Material](#)

[Tobacco Education Clearinghouse of California \(TECC\)](#)

Acknowledgement

CA Quits is funded by the California Tobacco Prevention Program, California of Public Health ([CTPP - CDPH](#)) and is located at the University of California, Davis. For more information visit the [CA Quits website](#).

Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health

A tobacco-free environment is an important component in keeping women and families healthy. Any level of exposure to tobacco/nicotine products is not safe. Health providers can help reduce exposure risks by screening patients and providing cessation support at each visit. The following resources support tobacco/nicotine cessation for maternal, child, and adolescent populations.

For Providers:

[Ask, Advise, Refer Script Flyer – Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health \(CA Quits\)](#)

[Postpartum Visit Algorithms – Interconception Care Project of California](#)

[Trauma-Informed Approaches to Tobacco Prevention and Cessation](#)

[Tobacco Resources - American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

For Patients:

[Postpartum Patient Handouts \(English and Spanish\) - Interconception Care Project of California](#)

[Tobacco and Cannabis Use and Maternal Health Harms - California Department of Public Health](#)

[Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health Education Resources - California Department of Public Health](#)

[Pregnancy and Parents - Kick It California](#)

Cancer

A tobacco-free environment is an important component in keeping women and families healthy. Any level of exposure to tobacco/nicotine products is not safe. Health providers can help reduce exposure risks by screening patients and providing cessation support at each visit. The following resources support tobacco/nicotine cessation for maternal, child, and adolescent populations.

For Providers:

[Smoking and Cancer Care: What Health Professionals Need to Know - Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)

[5 A's Tobacco Cessation Counseling Guidesheet and Ask-Advise-Refer Toolkit \(Rx for Change\)](#)

[Analyzing Progress in Tobacco Control and Smoking Cessation \(IASLC Lecture, 2021\)](#)

[Smoking Cessation and Cancer Care Action Framework \(Canadian Partnership Against Cancer\)](#)

[Tobacco Cessation Tools and Resources \(American Society of Clinical Oncology\)](#)

[Tobacco and Cancer Treatment Outcomes \(World Health Organization\)](#)

For Patients:

[Smoking can cause cancer almost anywhere in your body \(CDC\)](#)

[Quit Smoking Before Your Operation \(American College of Surgeons\)](#)