



The summary of information presented in this brochure is intended for Medicare Fee-For-Service physicians, providers, suppliers, and other health care professionals who furnish or provide referrals for and/or file claims for the Medicare-covered preventive benefit discussed in this brochure.

Tobacco use continues to be the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States. Smoking can attribute to and exacerbate heart disease, stroke, lung disease, cancer, diabetes, hypertension, osteoporosis, macular degeneration, abdominal aortic aneurysm, and cataracts. Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body and generally diminishes the health of smokers.

Quitting tobacco use can be difficult. Most smokers are dependent on nicotine, the psychoactive drug in tobacco products that produces dependence. Nicotine dependence is the most common form of chemical dependence in the United States. Research suggests that nicotine is as addictive as heroin, cocaine, or alcohol. Attempts to quit may be accompanied by symptoms of withdrawal, including irritability, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and increased appetite. Tobacco dependence is a chronic condition that often requires repeated intervention.

Quitting smoking has immediate as well as long term affects. People who stop smoking greatly reduce their risk of dying prematurely and lower their risk of heart disease, stroke, lung disease and other health conditions caused by smoking. Benefits are greater for people who stop at earlier ages, but smoking cessation is beneficial at any age.

Older smokers have been shown to be more successful in their attempts to quit than younger smokers and respond favorably to their health care providers' advice to quit smoking. Brief clinical interventions and counseling by health care providers have been shown to increase the chances of successful cessation.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) determined the evidence was adequate to conclude that counseling to prevent tobacco use smoking and tobacco-use cessation counseling, is reasonable and necessary for certain individuals and should be covered by Medicare.

TOBACCO-USE CESSATION COUNSELING SERVICES

Medicare provides coverage of two levels of smoking and tobacco-use cessation counseling (intermediate and intensive) for beneficiaries who use tobacco and have been diagnosed with a recognized tobacco-related disease or who exhibit symptoms consistent with tobacco-related disease.

COVERAGE INFORMATION FOR SYMPTOMATIC BENEFICIARIES

Medicare provides coverage of smoking and tobacco-use cessation counseling services for outpatient and hospitalized beneficiaries who meet the following criteria:

- Who use tobacco and have been diagnosed with a recognized tobacco-related disease or who exhibit symptoms consistent with tobacco-related disease.

Medicare will cover two cessation attempts per year. Each attempt may include a maximum of four intermediate or intensive counseling sessions. The total annual benefit covers up to eight smoking and tobacco-use cessation counseling sessions in a 12-month period.

The beneficiary may receive another eight counseling sessions during a second or subsequent year after 11 months have passed since the first Medicare-covered cessation counseling session was performed. Example: The beneficiary received the first of eight covered sessions in January 2011. The count starts beginning February 2011. The beneficiary is eligible to receive a second series of eight sessions in January 2012.

Medicare's prescription drug benefit also covers smoking and tobacco-use cessation agents prescribed by a physician.

Note: Medicare covers minimal cessation counseling

(defined as 3 minutes or less in duration) as part of each Evaluation and Management visit, and it is not separately billable.

Eligible beneficiaries are covered under Medicare Part B. Both the coinsurance and deductible apply.

TOBACCO-USE CESSATION COUNSELING ATTEMPT

A cessation counseling attempt occurs when a qualified physician or other Medicare-recognized practitioner determines that a beneficiary meets the eligibility requirements and initiates treatment with a cessation counseling attempt. A cessation counseling attempt includes the following:

- Up to four cessation counseling sessions (one attempt = up to four sessions)
- Two cessation counseling attempts (or up to 8 cessation counseling sessions) are allowed every 12 months.

COUNSELING TO PREVENT TOBACCO USE

For dates of service on or after August 25, 2010, the counseling services are expanded to include beneficiaries who do not have signs or symptoms of tobacco-related disease.

COVERAGE INFORMATION FOR ASYMPTOMATIC BENEFICIARIES

Medicare provides coverage of counseling to prevent tobacco use for outpatient and hospitalized beneficiaries who meet the following criteria:

- Who use tobacco (regardless of whether they have signs or symptoms of tobacco-related disease);

Additional coverage criteria:

- Beneficiaries must be competent and alert at the time that counseling services are provided; and
- Counseling is furnished by a qualified physician or other Medicare-recognized practitioner.

Eligible beneficiaries are covered under Medicare Part B. Both the coinsurance and deductible are waived.

COUNSELING TO PREVENT TOBACCO USE SESSION

A counseling session refers to face-to-face patient contact at one of two levels:

- Intermediate (greater than 3 minutes and less than 10 minutes); or
- Intensive (greater than 10 minutes).

Counseling sessions may be performed “incident to” the services of a qualified practitioner. During the 12-month period, the practitioner and the beneficiary have flexibility to choose between intermediate or intensive counseling for each session.

DOCUMENTATION

Medical record documentation must show, for each Medicare beneficiary for whom a smoking and tobacco-use cessation counseling or counseling to prevent tobacco use claim is made, standard information along with sufficient beneficiary history to adequately demonstrate that Medicare coverage conditions were met.

RESOURCES

The Department of Health and Human Services has developed a website, Smokefree.gov, <http://www.smokefree.gov/>, that provides information, resources, and tools to support health professionals in delivering smoking cessation counseling services based on the Public Health Service clinical practice guideline on treating tobacco use and dependence.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s, Smoking and Tobacco Use website, <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/>, provides information, resources, and clinical tools to assist health care professionals in delivering smoking cessation counseling.

CMS has developed a variety of educational resources as part of a broad outreach campaign to promote awareness and increase utilization of Medicare-covered preventive services. For more information about coverage, coding, billing, and reimbursement of Medicare-covered preventive services and screenings, visit http://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp on the CMS website.

MEDICARE LEARNING NETWORK® (MLN)

The Medicare Learning Network® (MLN) is the brand name for official CMS educational products and information for Medicare Fee-For-Service Providers. For additional information, visit the Medicare Learning Network®’s web page at <http://www.cms.gov/MLNGenInfo> on the CMS website.

Your feedback is important to us and we use your suggestions to help us improve our educational products, services and activities and to develop products, services and activities that better meet your educational needs. To evaluate Medicare Learning Network® (MLN) products, services and activities you have participated in, reviewed, or downloaded, please go to <http://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts> and click on the link called ‘MLN Opinion Page’ in the left-hand menu and follow the instructions. Please send your suggestions related to MLN product topics or formats to MLN@cms.hhs.gov.

BENEFICIARY-RELATED INFORMATION

Smokefree.gov, <http://www.smokefree.gov/>, provides accurate, up-to-date information and professional assistance to help support the immediate and long-term needs of people trying to quit smoking.

The official U.S. Government website for people with Medicare is located on the web at <http://www.medicare.gov/>, or more information can be obtained by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

This brochure was current at the time it was published or uploaded onto the web. Medicare policy changes frequently so links to the source documents have been provided within the document for your reference.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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Official CMS Information for
Medicare Fee-For-Service Providers

TOBACCO-USE CESSATION COUNSELING SERVICES



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