

Alaska Tobacco Facts: Behavioral health care providers help people quit tobacco and improve health outcomes



Behavioral health care providers play a critical role in helping people quit smoking for good. Most Alaskans who smoke and saw a mental health or behavioral health care provider (67%) agreed that advice from that provider helped encourage them to quit smoking.¹

A brief counseling intervention increases quit rates among tobacco users.² The Ask, Advise, Connect intervention is a quick and effective approach to address tobacco use in fewer than 3 minutes.

Ask	Advise	Connect
Every patient about tobacco use at every visit	All tobacco users to quit for good	Those ready to quit with resources

Tobacco-free campuses and tobacco use treatment work together to:

- support people trying to quit tobacco and
- improve behavioral health treatment outcomes³

According to recent surveys by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), half of Alaska substance use treatment centers and mental health clinics have smokefree campus and facility policies.⁴

Smoking can worsen mental health symptoms and complicate treatment.

Smoking among people with behavioral health conditions increases chances for greater depression symptoms, psychiatric hospitalization, suicidal behavior, and drug and alcohol relapse. Smoking can interfere with psychiatric medications, resulting in the need for higher medication doses to achieve the same therapeutic benefit.⁵

People with behavioral health conditions:

- Smoke about 40% of cigarettes sold in the United States but only make up 25% of the population⁷
- Have higher chances of dying from smoking-related diseases, like heart disease and cancer⁶
- May want to quit, but face additional challenges and benefit from extra help⁶

Tobacco-related diseases are the **most common causes of death**

among people with behavioral health conditions.⁶



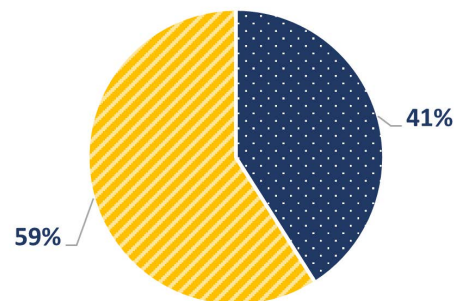
Quitting smoking can improve mental health and recovery from substance use.⁸

Quitting smoking can:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • Reduce depression, anxiety and stress | • Lower chances for substance relapse |
| • Support behavioral health treatment | • Improve physical health immediately ⁸ |

Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line can help Alaskans experiencing behavioral health conditions quit with proven strategies like free quit coaching and nicotine patches, lozenges, and gum approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). **Over 1 in 3 people** (41%) who called Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line last year reported having one or more behavioral health conditions. The most common conditions reported were depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).⁹

41% of Quit Line callers reported having at least 1 behavioral health condition.



- Quit Line participants who reported one or more mental health conditions
- Quit Line participants who reported no behavioral health conditions

There are free resources for behavioral health care providers.



Alaska Tobacco Facts: Behavioral health care providers help people quit tobacco and improve health outcomes

Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line:



Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line offers a tailored program to help people experiencing behavioral health conditions quit tobacco.

This specialized program provides stress management; unlimited phone support; additional nicotine replacement therapy including patches, lozenges, and gum; and coordinated treatment with the behavioral health care team.

- **Fax referral program**—Providers can refer their patients directly to the Quit Line using the Fax referral program at https://health.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Documents/Tobacco/TobaccoFreeAlaska/factsheets/TobaccoFreeAlaska_FaxReferralForm_Cessation.pdf.
- Patients can **call** 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), **text** READY to 34191, or **visit** [AlaskaQuitLine.com](https://alaskaquitline.com) to get enrolled.
- Order Quit Line print materials to share with patients, including posters, tearaway cards, and rack cards. All are available at **no cost to you**. Email tobacco@alaska.gov to place an order.



Other resources for providers:



• **Addressing Nicotine Addiction in Alaska Behavioral Health Care**—The Alaska



Tobacco Prevention and Control program is an approved distance learning organization through the Association for Addiction Professionals (NAADAC).

The following module provides continuing education: <https://learn.optum.com/courses/addressing-nicotine-addiction-in-alaska-behavioral-health-care>.

• **Alaska Medicaid Tobacco Treatment Coverage**—

A fact sheet that outlines counseling and reimbursement for tobacco cessation counseling can be found at https://health.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Documents/Tobacco/TobaccoFreeAlaska/quitline/TPC_ProviderCessationGuide.pdf.

• **Million Hearts® Tobacco Cessation Change Package**—

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) created a guide for behavioral health settings and health care professionals to share quality improvements to deliver optimal treatment to patients who use tobacco. https://millionhearts.hhs.gov/files/tobacco_cessation_change_pkg.pdf

References

- ¹ Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health, Section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 2022 Alaska Online Adult Tobacco Survey (OATS) Healthcare & Quitline Support for Quitting. Published January 2023. Available upon request.
- ² US Department of Health and Human Services. Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 update. Published May 2008. Accessed January 3, 2023. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK63943/>
- ³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). Tobacco Cessation Interventions and Smoke-Free Policies in Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities — United States, 2016. Published May 11, 2018. Accessed September 7, 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6718a3.htm>
- ⁴ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2020 National Mental Health Services Survey (N-MHSS) and the 2020 National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS). Retrieved December 16, 2021, from <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/locator>
- ⁵ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Implementing Tobacco Cessation Treatment for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness: A Quick Guide for Program Directors and Clinicians. SAMHSA Publication No. PEP19-02-00-001. Accessed March 7, 2023. https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/pep19-02-00-001_0.pdf#page=3
- ⁶ American Lung Association. Behavioral Health & Tobacco Use. Published November 17, 2022. Accessed March 7 2023. <https://www.lung.org/quit-smoking/smoking-facts/impact-of-tobacco-use/behavioral-health-tobacco-use>
- ⁷ Public Health Law Center a Mitchell Hamline School of Law. Behavioral Health & Tobacco Dependency: Integrating Treatment into Behavioral Health Facilities. Published January 2022. <https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/resources/Behavioral-Health-Tobacco-Dependency.pdf>
- ⁸ Knudsen, H.K., Studts, C.R., & Studts, J.L. (2012). The implementation of smoking cessation counseling in substance abuse treatment. *Journal of Behavioral Health Services and Research*, 39(1), 28-41. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3189278/>
- ⁹ Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, Section of Chronic Disease and Health Promotion. Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line Program records; July 2021 - June 2022. Available upon request.

Publication date: April 2023