



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Department of Public Health

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MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

MONICA BHAREL, MD, MPH
Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

TO: Massachusetts Health Care Providers

FROM: DPH Commissioner Monica Bharel, MD, MPH

DATE: October 15, 2019

RE: Reminder - Availability of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products via standing order

On September 24, the Baker/Polito Administration implemented a four-month [ban on e-cigarettes and vaping products](#) while a nationwide investigation of severe lung disease cases associated with these products takes place.

Thank you for all you are doing to help your patients—both youth and adults—to adjust to this change. As you know, this may be especially challenging for patients who have a behavioral health or substance use issue. To assist you in your critical role in helping people who want to quit e-cigarettes, vapes, or other tobacco products, we are providing resources and information you can use to inform your patients about the availability of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products through the [Commissioner's Order issued by the Department of Public Health](#) that facilitates insurance coverage for these products.

- The [Standing Order](#) covers NRT products for those age 18 or older with proper identification.
- NRT products may be dispensed to those **under age 18 with a prescription** from their health care provider.
- Pharmacists are asked to make a reasonable effort to determine if the purchaser's insurance covers the selected NRT product.

You can also direct patients to the Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline at (800) QUIT-NOW for help and resources in both English and Spanish (interpreter services are available for other languages).

Lastly, thank you for assisting with the requirement to report any suspected cases to DPH using [the PDF-fillable form](#) and faxing it to the confidential fax line at 617-983-6813.

Questions about this form may be addressed to John Bernardo, M.D.
at john.bernardo@state.ma.us.

Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Clinical Provider Resources for

Vaping Cessation and Smoking Cessation

A combination of medication and counseling has been shown to triple chances of successful cessation:

- **Refer to QuitWorks.** QuitWorks is a free, evidence-based referral service that connects patients with phone-based counseling through the Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline to help them stop smoking. Once a referral is made to Quitworks, providers receive feedback reports to stay informed of their patient's progress.
- **Encourage patients to call the Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline 1-800-QUIT-NOW** (7 days per week/24 hours per day, holiday hours may vary) to receive counseling online, by phone or through eChat and at least four weeks of free nicotine patches.

- **When appropriate, recommend or prescribe quit smoking medications.** Many medicines help with withdrawal symptoms and are not addictive. The nicotine patch, gum or lozenges, are available over the counter without a prescription. The prescription medications include Chantix, Zyban, inhaler, and spray. For patients who need help quitting substances other than nicotine, **The Massachusetts Substance Use Helpline** (8am-10pm Mon-Fri, and 8am-6pm weekends) is the only statewide, public resource for finding licensed and approved substance use treatment and recovery services across the Commonwealth. Helpline services are free and confidential and have trained specialists on staff who can help callers understand the treatment system in order to identify the best treatment options.

Encourage young people to ask their school nurse or counselor, athletic coach, doctor, parent or other trusted adult for help, and recommend that your youth and young adult patients consider these resources:

- **My Life, My Quit™** has youth coach specialists trained to help young people by phone or text. Call or text "Start My Quit" to 855-891-9989 for free and confidential help. For more information or to sign up online, visit mylifemyquit.com.
- **This is Quitting** powered by truth® is a free and confidential texting program for young people who vape. Young people can text "VapeFreeMass" to 88709 to get started. This service is offered in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.
- Visit teen.smokefree.gov for tools and tips.

Visit mass.gov/vaping to learn about vaping addiction, health, and quitting.

Information for parents/adults is available at getoutraged.org.

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