Hospitals’ Unique Role in Improving Tobacco Dependence in Oklahoma

- Hospitalization is an efficient and effective opportunity to identify and treat tobacco users.\(^1\) However, it is often overlooked.

- **Effective methods to stop smoking are available.** Research shows that brief (1-3 minutes) cessation counseling interventions for smoking cessation increase the rate of smoking cessation by an absolute 15%.\(^2\)

- **Medication and counseling interventions** by a health professional, along with referrals to tobacco use prevention counseling “helplines” is the most successful intervention.

- These evidence-based strategies are recommended by the United States Public Health Service, *Clinical Practice Guideline, 2008: Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence.*

- One in four Oklahomans smoke. **Oklahoma hospitals admit at least 114,000 tobacco users each year.** Figures may be higher in Oklahoma due to the high prevalence of heart disease and other tobacco related illnesses.

- **65% of smokers hospitalized with myocardial infarction reported intentions to quit smoking** within the next 30 days as compared to 20% of non-hospitalized smokers.\(^3\) Hospitalized patients with significant life threatening illnesses are more motivated to stop tobacco use than other individuals.

- **Quitting smoking is associated with reduced post-surgical complications, reduced lengths of stay, and improved survival.**\(^4\)
  - Delayed wound healing, including bone healing.
  - Decreased post-surgical infections.
  - Decreased cardiopulmonary complications.
  - Decreased post operative care.
  - Improved surgical results.
  - Decreased risk of second heart attacks.
  - Decreased risk for second primary tumors in patients with lung, head and neck cancers.

- **Only 59% of patients were advised to quit tobacco use by their health professional.**\(^5\) A major obstacle to greater reductions in tobacco use prevalence is that clinicians do not consistently provide these effective smoking cessation treatments.\(^6\) They are unaware of or uncomfortable with using them.

- To participate in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) quality data reporting program which assures that hospital’s receive the full amount of reimbursement possible, hospitals are required to collect data regarding the smoking status of patients admitted
only for acute myocardial infarction, heart failure and pneumonia, and offer some level of smoking cessation counseling.

- Meeting these quality indicators does not require implementation of any effective, comprehensive, evidence-based intervention methods or referrals for counseling. Most hospitals implement ineffective, information-only methods of stopping tobacco use and are in place for the purpose of passing this quality indicator and they are not effective.
- Hospitals are not always aware of local, state and national resources that link patients to effective counseling - such as the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline.
- Implementing effective cessation methods in hospitals would mean thousands of Oklahoma tobacco users would be given additional support and opportunities to quit this deadly addiction.

**Evidence-Based Guideline Recommendations for System Changes**

The United States Public Health Service (USPHS) *Clinical Practice Guideline: Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence*, recommends four strategies to implement the most effective intervention.

These strategies, combined, have demonstrated to be effective as part of a coordinated effort to provide consistent and effective tobacco use interventions:

- Hospitals should promote policies that provide and support tobacco dependence services.
- Every clinic and hospital should implement a tobacco-user identification system to ask, assess and refer tobacco users, at a minimum.
- Clinical sites and hospitals should dedicate themselves to provide tobacco dependence treatment and assess the delivery of this treatment in staff performance evaluations.
- All health care systems should provide education, resources and feedback to promote provider interventions.

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TOBACCO STOPS WITH ME.

5. Oklahoma State Health Department, *Smoking Among Adults Fact Sheet*, http://www.health.state.ok.us/program/tobac/Oklahoma%20Adults_Smoking.pdf

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