



THE CITY OF NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Michael R. Bloomberg

Mayor

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH

Commissioner

nyc.gov/health

Dear Behavioral Health Provider:

Smoking doubles the risk of death in every age group, killing 8,000 people a year in New York City. Individuals with a psychiatric or substance use disorder smoke 44% of all cigarettes consumed in the United States. This group is two-thirds more likely to be tobacco dependent than the general population.

Tobacco dependence contributes significantly to the leading causes of illness and death in people with behavioral health disorders, and there is evidence to show that tobacco use negatively impacts recovery rates from other substances.

More than two thirds of smokers want to quit, and more than half try to stop every year; however, fewer than 10% are successful in the long term without assistance. There is clear evidence that health care providers can greatly increase smokers' success in quitting. With counseling and use of nicotine replacement and other pharmacotherapies, the long-term quit rate can rise from less than 10% to 30%.

There are three key things you can do to help people quit smoking:

- 1. Assess smoking status and readiness to quit at intake and at least every three months thereafter.**
- 2. Prescribe medications and smoking cessation treatment to assist people in becoming tobacco-free.**
- 3. Provide education and raise awareness about becoming and remaining tobacco-free.**

We hope you find the clinical tools, provider resources and public education materials in this Action Kit useful in assisting you in your efforts to help individuals become, and remain, tobacco-free. Your Health Department Representative is visiting you to discuss ways of applying these methods in your program. Thank you for your dedication and contribution to the health of all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH

Commissioner

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene