The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

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Dear Massachusetts Healthcare Provider,

Late last year, the Legislature passed and Governor Charlie Baker signed into law An Act Modernizing Tobacco Control. On December 11, 2019, the state’s Public Health Council approved an emergency regulation, 105 CMR 665: Minimum Standards for Retail Sale of Tobacco and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems, to implement the provisions of the law, including restrictions on the sale of flavored vaping products, effective immediately. Additionally, in June 2020, the statute will restrict the sale of any other flavored tobacco product, including menthol cigarettes.

As a result of these changes, your patients—both youth and adults—may need your help potentially quitting tobacco and nicotine. This may be especially true for patients who have behavioral health or substance use issues. As you know, a brief intervention by a healthcare provider can greatly increase a patient’s motivation to quit, and evidence shows that pairing counseling with medication is not only the most effective way to quit, but can also triple the chances of successfully doing so.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health encourages you to discuss options regarding cessation medication, including FDA-approved over-the-counter options or FDA-approved prescription Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) with your patients. While the temporary ban on the sale of vaping products and standing order for dispensing over-the-counter NRT are no longer in effect, the Massachusetts Smokers’ Helpline continues to provide free coaching and eight weeks of NRT to eligible callers (1-800-QUIT-NOW).

Included with this letter below are additional resources from the Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program. More information related to the new statute and regulation can be found at [mass.gov/newtobaccolaw](https://www.mass.gov/guides/2019-tobacco-control-law).

Thank you for your efforts to help your patients lead healthier lives, including through quitting vaping products, combustible cigarettes, or other tobacco or nicotine products.



Monica Bharel, MD, MPH

Commissioner

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**Massachusetts Tobacco Cessation and Prevention Program**

**Clinical Provider Resources for Vaping Cessation and Smoking Cessation**

A combination of medication and counseling has been shown to triple chances of successful cessation. Here are some resources for patients:

* **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 eight weeks of free nicotine patches, lozenges or gum.
* **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. Some prescription medications include Chantix, Zyban, nicotine inhaler and nasal 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 to identify the best treatment options.

**Resources for youth and young adult patients:**

* **My Life, My Quit™** combines best practices for youth tobacco cessation adapted to include vaping and new ways to reach a specially trained youth coach using live text messaging or online chat. Coaches emphasize that the decision to stop is personal, and provide information to help cope with stress, navigate social situations, and support developing a tobacco-free identity. *Youth can call or text "Start My Quit" to 855-891-9989 for free and confidential help.* 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. Youth can also connect with their school nurse, counselor, or coach to help 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 at **getoutraged.org**.

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