

Executive Summary

Many smokers know that quitting is the single most important step to improve their health,¹ and that quitting reduces their risk for serious diseases like lung cancer, heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Some smokers also know that they will save money when they no longer buy cigarettes, and that their employer will benefit from fewer sick days and smoke breaks.

Knowing this, however, does not make it any easier to quit. The addiction to nicotine is a powerful one, and it takes most smokers multiple quit attempts before they are successful. Quitting 'cold turkey' generally is not effective. The majority of smokers need help quitting. Fortunately there are several treatments, including medications and counseling, which are proven to help smokers quit for good.

Five Most Quit-Friendly States:

Maine
North Dakota
Delaware
Oklahoma
Wyoming

The American Lung Association believes that every smoker should have easy access to the help they need to quit smoking, and that states and the federal government have a responsibility to enact public policies that reach this goal. In 2011, the federal government took important steps in this direction, as did some state policymakers. However, significant progress at the federal and state levels is still needed to ensure that all smokers have access to the *right* treatments to quit.

This report looks at recent and upcoming actions at the federal and state levels that will make it easier for smokers to quit. It includes state-by-state information on what tobacco cessation treatments are covered by Medicaid programs and state employee health plans, as well as which states require tobacco cessation coverage in private insurance plans, and resources provided to services that offer tobacco cessation counseling by phone, also known as quitlines.

Five Least Quit-Friendly States:

Georgia
Louisiana
Alabama
Maryland
New Jersey

Additional Highlights

- Six states cover a comprehensive tobacco cessation benefit for all Medicaid enrollees: Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, North Carolina and Pennsylvania
- Two states do not cover any tobacco cessation treatments for all Medicaid enrollees: Alabama and Georgia
- Five states cover a comprehensive tobacco cessation benefit for all state employees: Illinois, Indiana, Maine, New Mexico and North Dakota
- Two states do not cover any tobacco cessation treatments for state employees: Louisiana and Maryland
- Nine states require private insurance plans to cover tobacco cessation treatments: Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island and Vermont
- Four states invest in quitlines at or above the national minimum standard: Maine, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming

Quit-Friendly States

States can help smokers quit in several different ways. State Medicaid programs can cover a comprehensive tobacco cessation benefit for low-income enrollees. State governments can provide a similar benefit to state employees. State policymakers can require private insurance companies in the state to cover tobacco cessation treatments. State policymakers can also adequately fund tobacco cessation and prevention programs at levels recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide vital services, like quitlines, for tobacco users in their state.²

States should implement all of these strategies for a comprehensive approach to tobacco cessation. The following five states had the highest scores for their overall efforts to help smokers quit.

Five Most Quit-Friendly States

1. Maine
2. North Dakota
3. Delaware
4. Oklahoma
4. Wyoming

Other states have not put policies in place or made the investments necessary to help smokers quit. These states do not provide adequate coverage to help smokers on Medicaid, state employee health plans and private insurance; and provide little to no funding for quitlines. Policymakers in these states are tragically missing the opportunity to improve their citizens' health and lives, as well as save their state money. These five states had the lowest scores for their overall approach to helping smokers quit.

Five Least Quit-Friendly States

1. Georgia
2. Louisiana
3. Alabama
3. Maryland
5. New Jersey

* Note that several states tied within these rankings. States were ranked based on the methodology used in the American Lung Association's *State of Tobacco Control Report*. This methodology evaluates a state's (1) coverage of tobacco cessation treatments for Medicaid enrollees, (2) coverage of tobacco cessation treatments for state employees and dependents, (3) requirements for tobacco cessation treatment coverage in private insurance, and (4) funding of state quitline. More information about this methodology can be found at <http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/tobacco-control-advocacy/reports-resources/helping-smokers-quit-state.html>.