

Tobacco Cessation for the Uninsured

In 2016, approximately 27.6 million non-elderly individuals were uninsured in the United States. This represents about 10 percent of the population – an historic low rate.¹ This uninsured population smokes at a rate of 27.4 percent, almost three times higher than those with private insurance.² However, because they lack health insurance, this population has few options to get the help they need to quit tobacco.

Who are the uninsured?

The uninsured are more likely to be low-income. In 2017, eight out of 10 individuals in the uninsured population were in families with incomes below 400 percent of the federal poverty level. This group is composed of mainly adults (approximately 85 percent) and mostly U.S. citizens (approximately 78 percent). While there is an uninsured population in each state, generally speaking, it is higher in the south.³

Approximately 75 percent of the uninsured population have at least one full time worker in their family, however. They are much more likely to not have a usual source of care, have fewer services when in the ED and have higher mortality.



Cessation Resources For the Uninsured

There are limited resources for the uninsured to access treatments to quit smoking, however there are a few that exist.

- **State Quitline:** Every state has a quitline that offers phone counseling to anyone that wants to quit smoking. Some state Quitlines offer limited supplies of Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT). To access the Quitline, call 1-800-QUITNOW.
- **Over-the-Counter NRT.** NRT gum, NRT patches and the NRT lozenge are all sold over the counter, but can be costly.
- Various pharmaceutical companies have coupon and discount programs. Discounts can vary by product and income. More information can be found at:
 - www.quit.com
 - www.pfizerrxpathways.com

Comprehensive Cessation Benefit:

Seven Medications:

NRT Gum (OTC)* | NRT Patch (OTC)
NRT Lozenge (OTC) | NRT Inhaler
NRT Nasal Spray | Bupropion / Zyban
Varenicline (Chantix)

Three Forms of Counseling:

Individual | Group | Phone

¹ <https://www.kff.org/uninsured/fact-sheet/key-facts-about-the-uninsured-population/>

² Jamal A, King BA, Neff LJ, Whitmill J, Babb SD, Graffunder CM. Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults – United States, 2005–2015. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2016;65:1205–1211. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6544a2>

³ <https://www.kff.org/uninsured/fact-sheet/key-facts-about-the-uninsured-population/>

* OTC = Over-the-counter