

# Medicaid Smoking Cessation Benefit Reimbursement

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Does the healthcare provider need to document what was discussed during the smoking cessation counseling session to receive reimbursement?

Yes, the length of the counseling session, as well as specific evidenced-based interventions provided during the session, e.g. current tobacco use and discussion of pharmacotherapy, need to be documented; see pamphlet [Help Your Patients Quit Smoking: A Coaching Guide](#).

### Does the visit have to be solely for smoking cessation counseling?

No, smoking cessation can be part of a standard visit, as long as the provider uses the tobacco use disorder **ICD9 code 305.1** and the medical record documentation appropriately reflects the counseling session.

### What are the reimbursement rates?

Rates range from **\$10–\$20 for individuals** and **\$8.50–\$10 per person in groups**. Please see the [Reimbursement Guide](#) for more details, as these rates vary by session length.

### Can I bill Medicaid for counseling if a patient does not want to quit?

Yes, but you must include the required documentation in the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) or paper chart.

### Can I bill a consumer if they have emergency Medicaid?

No, you cannot be reimbursed by emergency Medicaid for cessation counseling services.

### I am a pediatrician. Can I bill for tobacco cessation counseling provided to the guardians of my pediatric patients?

No, the benefit does not apply to counseling the guardians of a patient. The tobacco cessation counseling must be provided to the patient who is a current smoker.

### Can I bill for both 99406 and 99407 if I have counseled a patient for more than 10 minutes?

No, providers can bill for only one procedure code per patient per day. Note: 99407 is used only for intensive counseling sessions (10 minutes or longer for individual or group counseling), with a maximum of 8 patients in a session.

## **If a patient has already received two counseling sessions, can they get four from another provider?**

Yes, over a 12-month period, a patient is eligible for a total of six sessions conducted by one or more providers. Providers should ask patients whether they have received cessation counseling in the past 12 months to ensure that the six-session limit hasn't been exceeded.

## **Are all medications covered by the benefit?**

Fee-for-service Medicaid covers all first-line, FDA-approved medications *except* nicotine lozenges. New York State conducted an analysis and decided that the inclusion of lozenges was not cost effective.

Managed care plans are not required to cover all medications, but most Medicaid managed care plans cover at least the nicotine patch and gum, bupropion (Zyban<sup>®</sup>), and varenicline (Chantix<sup>®</sup>); a few plans cover even more. Please consult your plan administrator or formulary list to see the current medications covered by the plans.

## **How many courses are covered and does this include combination therapy?**

Two three-month courses are covered per year, including combination therapy (e.g., patch and gum).

## **We know MDs, DOs, NPs, and LMs qualify for reimbursements, but do PAs?**

No, PAs cannot bill Medicaid for any services, including smoking cessation counseling. However, PAs can provide cessation counseling in a practitioner's office (physician, RNP, or LM) or in an Article 28 clinic, and then the clinic or practitioner can bill and receive payment for these services.

## **Can social workers, RNs, caseworkers, or mental health counselors be reimbursed for smoking cessation counseling?**

No, only MDs, DOs, LMs and NPs can receive reimbursement from Medicaid for cessation counseling.

## **Can MDs, DOs, NPs, and LMs receive reimbursement for relapse prevention?**

The smoking cessation counseling benefit applies to Medicaid recipients who currently smoke and was NOT designed for relapse prevention.

## **The HQ modifier is required to bill for a group session; what does the HQ stand for?**

The HQ modifier is used to indicate a "Group Setting"- to be used with procedure code **99407** to indicate a Smoking Cessation Counseling (SCC) group session.

## Can I be reimbursed for providing smoking cessation counseling for a dual-eligible patient [Medicare and Medicaid]?

Yes, providers can receive reimbursement for smoking cessation counseling if the dual-eligible patient has **Medicaid** as their primary insurance type. If **Medicare** is the patient's primary form of insurance, you should submit the claim to Medicare.

## Do I need a 25 modifier when billing for a dual-purpose visit?

No, this is not needed for reimbursement.

## Why am I not being reimbursed, even though I am providing counseling and billing for it?

Like many other Medicaid reimbursements, whether or not reimbursement is distributed to the individual provider depends on whether the provider is salaried and his/her arrangement with payers. Salaried providers will not receive the reimbursement, regardless of how payment is structured. Should issues arise, please check with your plan and employer.

## What if my claim is denied?

You can resubmit or appeal. Make sure you are using the correct code. You can also call the Call Center at 800-343-9000 with billing questions.

## Is inpatient counseling reimbursable?

No, only outpatient counseling is reimbursable through this benefit.

## If a surgeon counsels a patient at a post-operative visit, will that qualify for reimbursement?

No, under these circumstances, Smoking Cessation Counseling (SCC) services should be part of the global billing for the surgery. However, if a patient is counseled by a surgeon during a pre-surgical visit or consultation, this qualifies for reimbursement as long as the smoking cessation counseling intervention is properly documented in the claim for reimbursement.

## How can I help a patient who does not have Medicaid or Medicaid Managed Care receive medications for smoking cessation treatment?

1. The **BigAppleRx** card is a free card that provides discounts for prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) smoking cessation aids like Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), as long as a patient has a prescription. Prices fluctuate depending upon the brand; cardholders can expect an overall estimated savings of 47% on prescription medications and 15% overall savings on brand name drugs. Patients can go to [BigAppleRx.com](http://BigAppleRx.com) and print the card. If a printer is not available, patients can write the card numbers down or have the information texted to a mobile phone. Patients should check with their plan about whether purchases using the BigAppleRx card can help meet a deductible.

2. Any NYC resident can call 311 to be referred to the [NYS Smokers' Quitline](#), can enroll online at [nysmokefree.com](http://nysmokefree.com), or call 1- 866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) directly to receive free counseling support and NRT if deemed eligible.
3. Patients with private insurance can also call their respective plan to identify what smoking cessation benefits are available.

### Where can I refer a patient who wants additional support to quit smoking?

1. Quit-smoking programs across the city offer no- or low-cost medications and individual and/or group counseling. For a list of programs, please view the [Guide to Smoking Cessation Programs in New York City](#).
2. NYC patients can call 311 to be referred to the [NYS Smokers' Quitline](#), enroll online at [nysmokefree.com](http://nysmokefree.com), or call 1- 866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) directly to receive free counseling support and NRT if deemed eligible.
3. [NYC Quits](#), an online resource for smokers and recent quitters, is also available to your patients. Your patients can register to track their progress using the Cravings Log, write about struggles and successes in a Quit Diary, see how much money they can save by using the Quit Calculator, read and share quit tips, test their knowledge with quizzes and much more.
4. Patients can get extra support from thousands of other quitters by joining the Health Department's Facebook community "[I Quit Because.](#)"
5. Patients can also sign up to receive supportive text messages from [SmokefreeTXT](#). Please make sure that the patient is aware that although the service is free, the text messages are not.

### Where can I learn more about the New York State Medicaid reimbursement policy?

See the [April Medicaid Update](#) for the exact policy language. The New York City Health Department has also prepared a [Reimbursement Guide](#) for providers.

If providers, clinics or others have specific questions for the NYS Medicaid program, please contact:

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