

NATIONAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL

POLICY STATEMENT ON COMPREHENSIVE CESSATION SERVICES

The Network for LGBT Tobacco Control strongly supports equal access to healthcare for all individuals.

Barriers to accessing healthcare are a long-proven disparity for the LGBT communities. Additionally LGBT people experience a profound smoking disparity; LGBT smoking rates are from 35-200% higher than the general population.¹⁻³ The American Cancer Society estimates that over 30,000 LGBT people die each year of tobacco-related diseases.⁴ For all these reasons, providing barrier-free access to comprehensive cessation services is a priority for the Network for LGBT Tobacco Control.

One way to enhance access to healthcare is by requiring health insurance providers to cover all indicated tobacco cessation services. The Center for Disease Control and Preventions' document titled; *What Is the Role of Health Insurance Coverage in Tobacco Use Cessation?*, demonstrates that Health insurance coverage of medication and counseling increases the use of effective treatments and the number of successful quit attempts.⁵ Further, studies consistently show that if an individual has access to evidence-based tobacco cessation service or treatment their chances of successfully quitting more than doubles. These small but effective enhancements in cessation can have a large cumulative impact on the disproportionate burden of tobacco for LGBT people. Thus we believe it is very important to provide equal access to healthcare and resources by ensuring all health insurance policies include comprehensive coverage for tobacco cessation services.

1. Ryan H, Wortley PM, Easton A, Pederson L, Greenwood G. Smoking among lesbians, gays, and bisexuals: a review of the literature. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. Aug 2001;21(2):142-149.

2. Center for Health Policy Research at the University of California Los Angeles. California Health Interview Survey. <http://www.lgbtpartnership.org/didyouknow.html>. Accessed May 23, 2005.

3. Heck JE, Jacobson JS. Asthma diagnosis among individuals in same-sex relationships. *J Asthma*. Oct 2006;43(8):579-584.

4. American Cancer Society. Tobacco and the GLBT Community. <http://www.glbthealth.org/documents/GLBTTobacco.pdf>. Accessed September 13, 2010.

5. What Is the Role of Health Insurance Coverage in Tobacco Use Cessation?

http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/cessation/coverage/page2/index.htm Accessed September 13, 2010.