National Behavioral Health Network
for Tobacco & Cancer Control
from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

Taking Your Facility Tobacco Free during COVID-19

"It's the right thing to do and...it's in our patients' best interest."

-Mary Ward, President
McLeod Addictive Disease Center

Protect your clients and staff against serious COVID-19-related illnesses and improve overall health outcomes by taking your mental health and substance use organization tobacco-free.

The effects of COVID-19 – both short- and long-term – can be worse for people who use tobacco due to existing lung damage and a suppressed immune system. Individuals with mental health and substance use (MH/SU) challenges use commercial tobacco at rates **two to four times** greater than the general population, putting them at even greater risk for COVID-19-related morbidity and mortality.

Individuals with MH/SU challenges are increasingly interested in quitting due to greater health concerns and financial challenges brought on by COVID-19. So, this is a great time to increase efforts to take your organization tobacco-free and implement tobacco cessation services.

WHY GO TOBACCO-FREE?

- Provide a safe and healthy environment by prioritizing lung health and wellbeing.
    - » Reduce secondhand smoke exposure for clients, staff and survivors of COVID-19.
- Reduce the risk of transmission associated with sharing tobacco products among staff and clients.
- Reduce the overall risk of COVID-19 among clients who use tobacco.
    - » Quitting tobacco is the best defense against COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses.
- Implementing a tobacco-free policy is just one of many post-COVID-19 workplace changes.

RELATED RESOURCES:

- **How To Implement a Tobacco-free Policy one-pager:** Kick-start your efforts to go tobacco-free. Implement tobacco-free policies, engage staff, improve cessation services and sustain implementation success.

- **Taking Your Facility Tobacco-free: A Brief Overview:** Learn from success stories and find out how to make the case for return on investment (ROI).

- **Dimensions: Tobacco-free Toolkit for Healthcare Providers:** Discover information on tobacco cessation treatment services including screening and counseling, nicotine-replacement therapies, pharmacological supports, motivational interviewing (MI) and more.

- **Tobacco Free Toolkit for Behavioral Health Agencies:** Draft an effective tobacco-free policy with the support of this toolkit.

- **Transitioning to a Tobacco-free Facility:** Resources and sample policies: Resources to support agencies plan and move toward a tobacco-free campus policy.

- **A Conversation Around Addressing Organizational and Leadership Fears and Taking Facilities Tobacco-free:** Mary H. Ward, president of the McLeod Addictive Disease Center shares first-hand experiences of taking her facility tobacco-free during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Need assistance taking your organization tobacco free? Reach out to us for a one-on-one consultation at **www.BHtheChange.org**