



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
Ashwin Vasani, MD, PhD
Commissioner

June 2024

Dear Health Care Professional,

While smoking rates have declined in recent years, nearly 600,000 New Yorkers still smoke and need support. The reduction in smoking rates has not been experienced equally among all New Yorkers. In addition, over 400,000 adult New Yorkers now use e-cigarettes (vape), nearly half of whom never previously smoked. Racism and structural inequity expose certain communities to more harmful factors that encourage smoking and vaping, such as industry marketing and retailer access, and fewer protective factors, such as treatment support.

Nearly two-thirds of New Yorkers who smoke try to quit each year, but many do so without resources or support. At the same time, quitting any type of tobacco product can feel overwhelming, especially amid other life stressors. Some New Yorkers may not be ready or interested in quitting but may care about protecting those around them, saving money or participating in activities that are meaningful to them. As a health care provider, you can support all your patients who smoke or vape with tobacco use treatment, including medications, to help them reach their goals.

Although tobacco use treatment has traditionally been framed as only appropriate for patients who are ready to quit, tobacco use treatment medications can help all patients avoid uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms, whether they want to quit, reduce their use or avoid smoking in specific situations (such as at home, at work or in public spaces). As with other chronic conditions, the right dose and combination of medications is important and may change over time as patients' goals evolve. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (the Health Department) urges you to:

1. Ask patients about their tobacco use history and offer treatment to **all** patients who smoke or vape.
2. Develop a treatment plan, including counseling, medications and follow-up, based on patients' goals, whether they want to quit, reduce use or avoid smoking in specific situations.
3. Assess patients' goals and progress on the treatment plan at every visit.
4. Establish a practice workflow to ensure adequate follow-up and ongoing assessment of patient progress.

This Tobacco Treatment Action Kit contains clinical tools, provider resources and patient education materials to help you educate your patients about tobacco use treatment options and develop a treatment plan, regardless of their readiness to quit. Your Health Department representative is available to discuss ways to integrate these tools into your practice. By working together, we can improve the health of all New Yorkers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ashwin Vasani'.

Ashwin Vasani, MD, PhD
Commissioner
New York City Department of
Health and Mental Hygiene

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle E. Morse'.

Michelle E. Morse, MD, MPH
Chief Medical Officer
New York City Department of
Health and Mental Hygiene