

Definitions

For purposes of this document, the term defined has the meaning indicated below.

Smoking Cessation is the process of discontinuing tobacco smoking or tobacco use by a nicotine-dependent individual.

Smoking Cessation

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 15.5 percent of adults in the United States (18 years or older) smoke cigarettes. That's 37.8 million adults in the U.S. who currently smoke cigarettes despite the harmful effects of tobacco. Why is this? It is because smoking is addictive and quitting the habit is extremely difficult. Quitting often brings with it irritability, headaches, mood swings and additional cravings associated with smoking cessation.

Systematically encouraging and helping tobacco users to quit is the quickest and most effective approach to reducing tobacco-related disease, death and healthcare costs. As a result, the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommends healthcare providers ask all adults about their tobacco use and offer tobacco cessation interventions to those who use tobacco products.

For all Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City (Blue KC) plans that are required to meet the Affordable Care Act (ACA) preventive care requirements, tobacco cessation services are covered at no cost to members when received from an in-network provider.

Who is covered?

All members school-age and older.

What is covered?

Successful intervention begins with identifying users and appropriate interventions based upon the patient's willingness to quit. Providers are encouraged to use counseling and pharmacotherapy to help patients who are ready to stop smoking. The following smoking cessation preventative services are covered at no cost:

Screening and Counseling

- I. Screening
 - a. Providers should ask tobacco users about their tobacco status at every visit and document their responses.

II. Counseling

- a. Blue KC covers unlimited individual tobacco cessation counseling sessions at no cost to eligible members.

Please Note – Blue KC does not currently cover telephonic counseling for smoking cessation.

Medication

- I. Coverage includes certain U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved tobacco cessation medications, including over-the-counter options (with a doctor's prescription) to adults of any age except when medically contraindicated (i.e. pregnant women, smokeless tobacco users, light smokers and adolescents).
- II. Limited to two 90-day course of treatments per calendar year (this limit does not reset if a new drug is initiated).

Members from other Blue plans may or may not have coverage for the above mentioned services. Providers should verify a member's individual eligibility and benefits before providing any non-emergency test, procedure or service.

We appreciate your partnership. Should you have questions about smoking cessation, please contact your Provider Relations Representative or the Blue KC provider hotline at 816-395-3929.