
Smoking Cessation
Leadership Center



University of California
San Francisco

From Service to Support: Addressing Tobacco Use in Veterans, co-hosted by the National Behavioral Health Network for Tobacco and Cancer Control

- Paul Caseley, MA, CPC, TTS
- Dana Christofferson, PhD
- Alex Hurst, MHA

February 26, 2025

Moderator

Catherine Bonniot

Executive Director
Smoking Cessation Leadership
Center
University of California, San
Francisco
Catherine.Bonniot@ucsf.edu

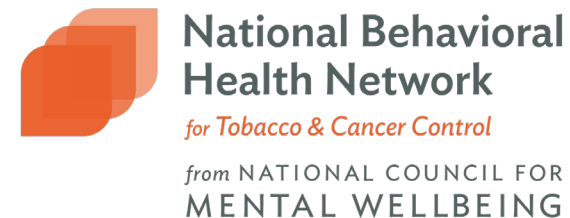
Disclosures

This UCSF CME activity was planned and developed to uphold academic standards to ensure balance, independence, objectivity, and scientific rigor; adhere to requirements to protect health information under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA); and include a mechanism to inform learners when unapproved or unlabeled uses of therapeutic products or agents are discussed or referenced.

All speakers, planning committee members, and reviewers have disclosed they have no relevant financial relationships to disclose with ineligible companies whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.

Catherine Bonniot; Paul Caseley; MA, CPC, TTS; Christine Cheng; Dana Christofferson, PhD; Brian Clark; Alex Hurst, MHA; Jennifer Matekuare; Ma Krisanta Pamatmat, MPH, CHES; Jessica Safier, MA; Jason Satterfield, PhD; Maya Vijayaraghavan, MD, MAS

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- Please **make sure your computer speakers are on** and adjust the volume accordingly.
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CME/CEU Statements

Accreditations:

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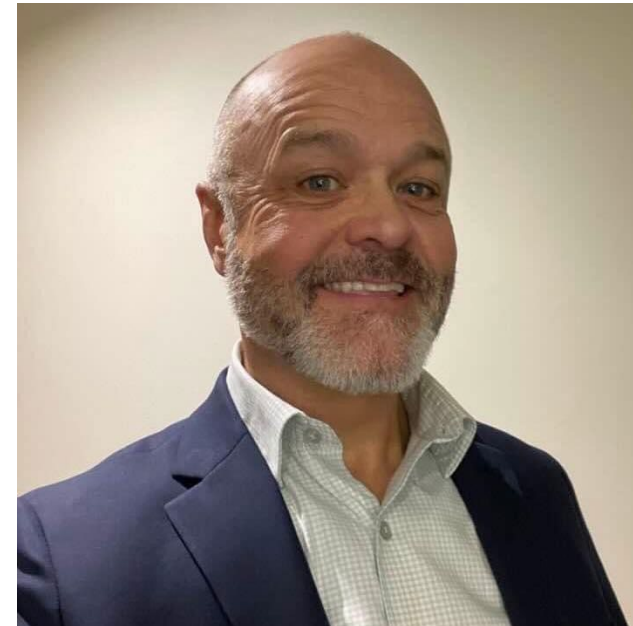
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- CDC Tips® Campaign 2025
 - Tips From Former Smokers® Motivational Cards:
www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/resources/motivational-cards/index.html
- Find resources at: www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/index.html

Today's Presenter

Paul Caseley
Program Manager, Veteran
Commercial Tobacco Cessation,
Washington State Department of
Veterans Affairs



Today's Presenter

Dana Christofferson
Deputy Director, Tobacco Use
Treatment Program, Veterans Health
Administration,

US Department of Veterans Affairs



Today's Presenter

Alex Hurst
Project Director

National Behavioral Health Network
for Tobacco and Cancer Control;
National Council for Mental Wellbeing





From Service to Support: Addressing Tobacco Use in Veterans

Wednesday, February 26, 2024

National Behavioral Health Network for Tobacco & Cancer Control

Funded by CDC's *Office on Smoking & Health & Division of Cancer Prevention & Control*

Provides resources and tools to help organizations reduce tobacco use and cancer among individuals experiencing mental health and substance use challenges

1 of 9 CDC National Networks dedicated to eliminating cancer and tobacco disparities in individuals with mental health and substance use challenges

Visit www.NBHNetwork.org

Free Access to...

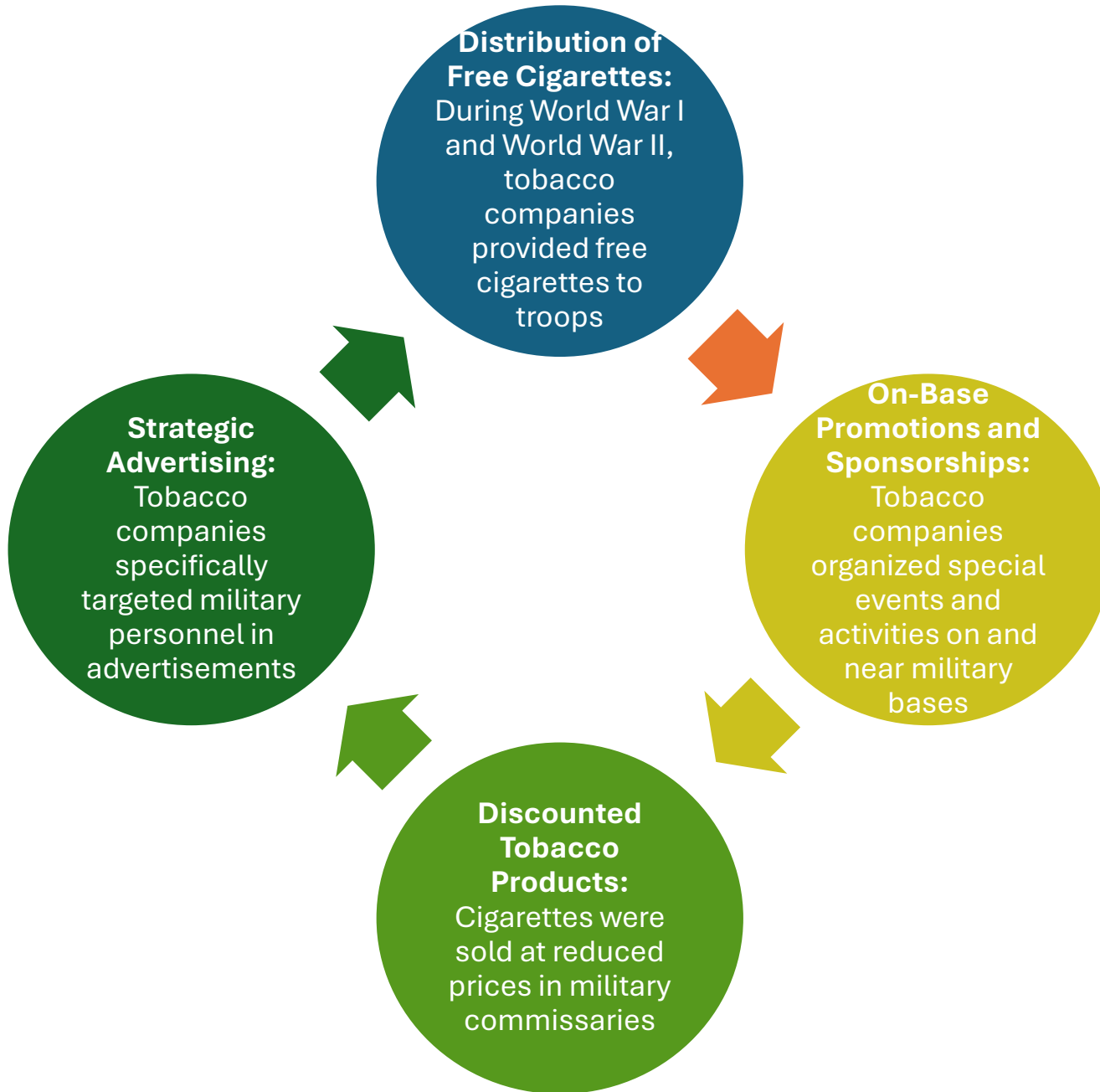
Toolkits, training opportunities, virtual communities and other resources

Webinars & Presentations

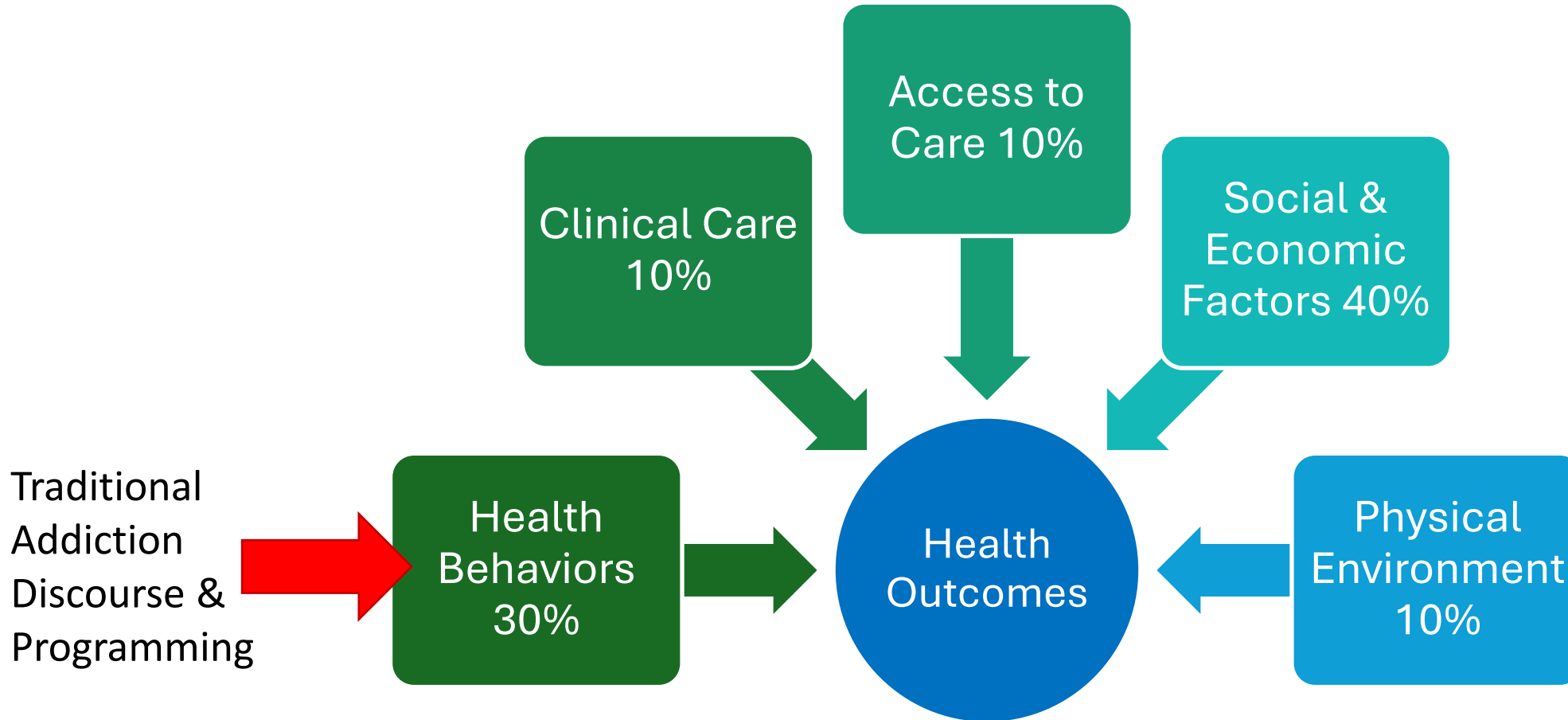
State Strategy Sessions

Communities of Practice

Influence of Tobacco Industry Targeting on Military Personnel & Culture



Determinants of Health



Health Status of People with Disabilities and Mental Health/Substance Use Disorders



1 out of 4 live with a disability



Nearly 60 million adults.

1 out of 4 people experience a diagnosable mental health or substance use disorder.

- Disabilities include limitations in cognition, mobility, hearing, vision, mental illness.
- People with disabilities smoke at about twice the rate of people without disabilities*.
- People with disabilities experience higher rates of certain cancers.

Sources:

Disability and Health Data System. National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Online. [Disability and Health Data System Explore by Indicator | NCBDDD | CDC](#) and Retrieved July 8, 2024.

*2024 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium. Center for Research on Disability, Institute on Disability, University of New Hampshire.

Mental Health America. 2024 Adult Ranking 2024. Retrieved from <https://mhanational.org/issues/2024/mental-health-america-adult-data>.

Tobacco Use & Health Disparities

Tobacco-Related Health Disparities Among People With Disabilities and Individuals with Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder

Higher Smoking Rates:

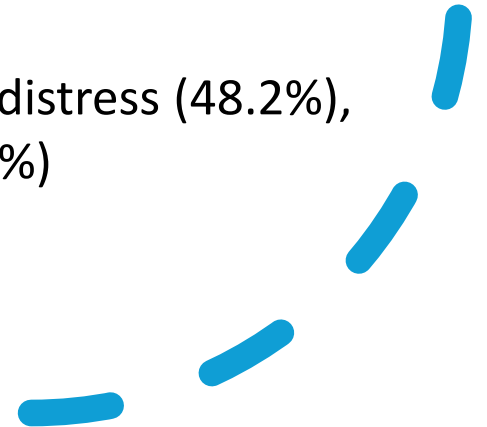
- 18.5% of PWD smoke vs. 10.9% of adults without disabilities
- Individuals with MH/SUD account for ~40% of adult cigarette consumption

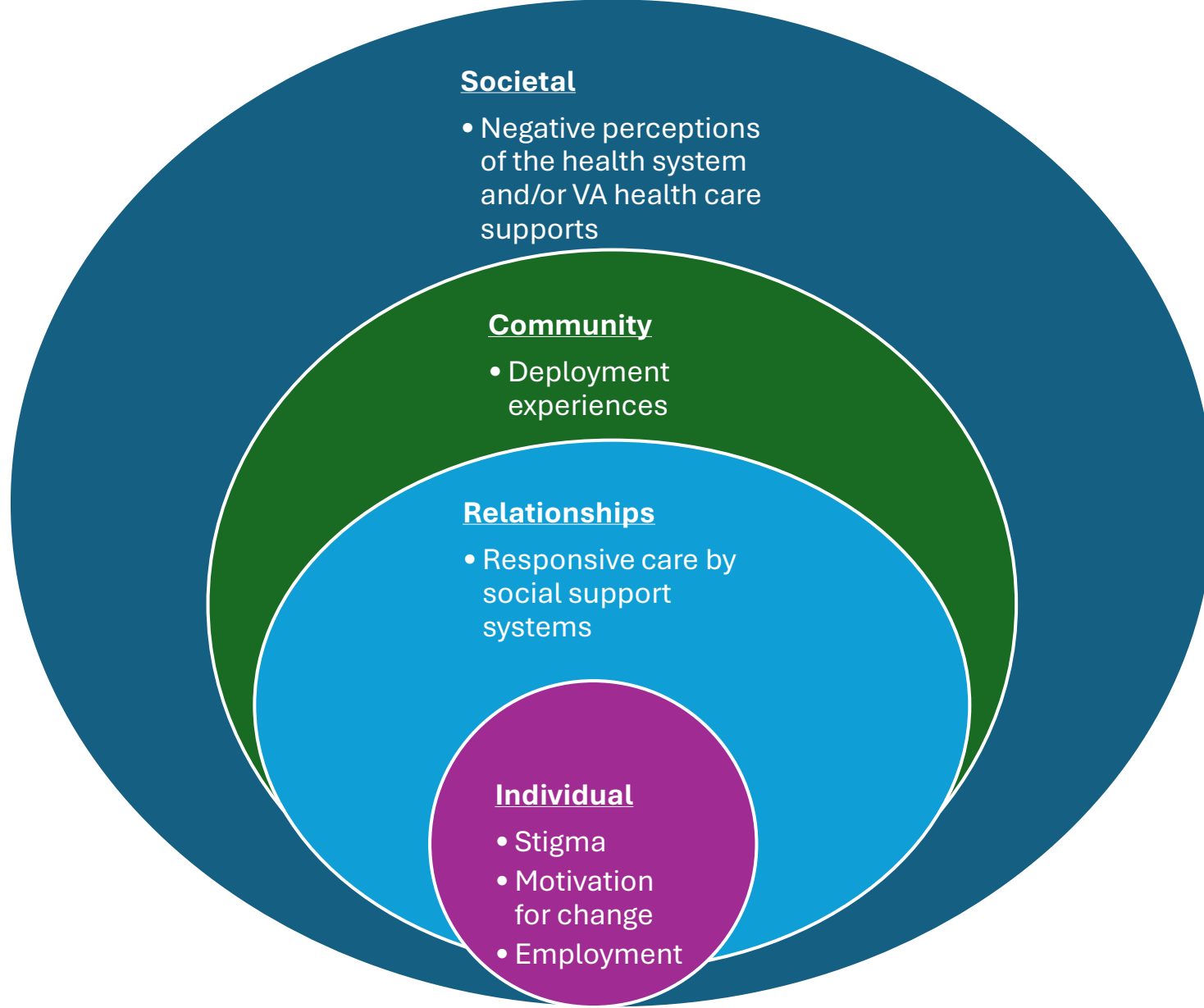
Health Impact:

- Higher cancer rates linked to commercial tobacco use among PWD & MH/SUD populations

Veterans & Tobacco Use:

- Higher prevalence vs. non-Veterans
- Increased use among those with psychological distress (48.2%), poverty (53.7%), and no health insurance (60.1%)

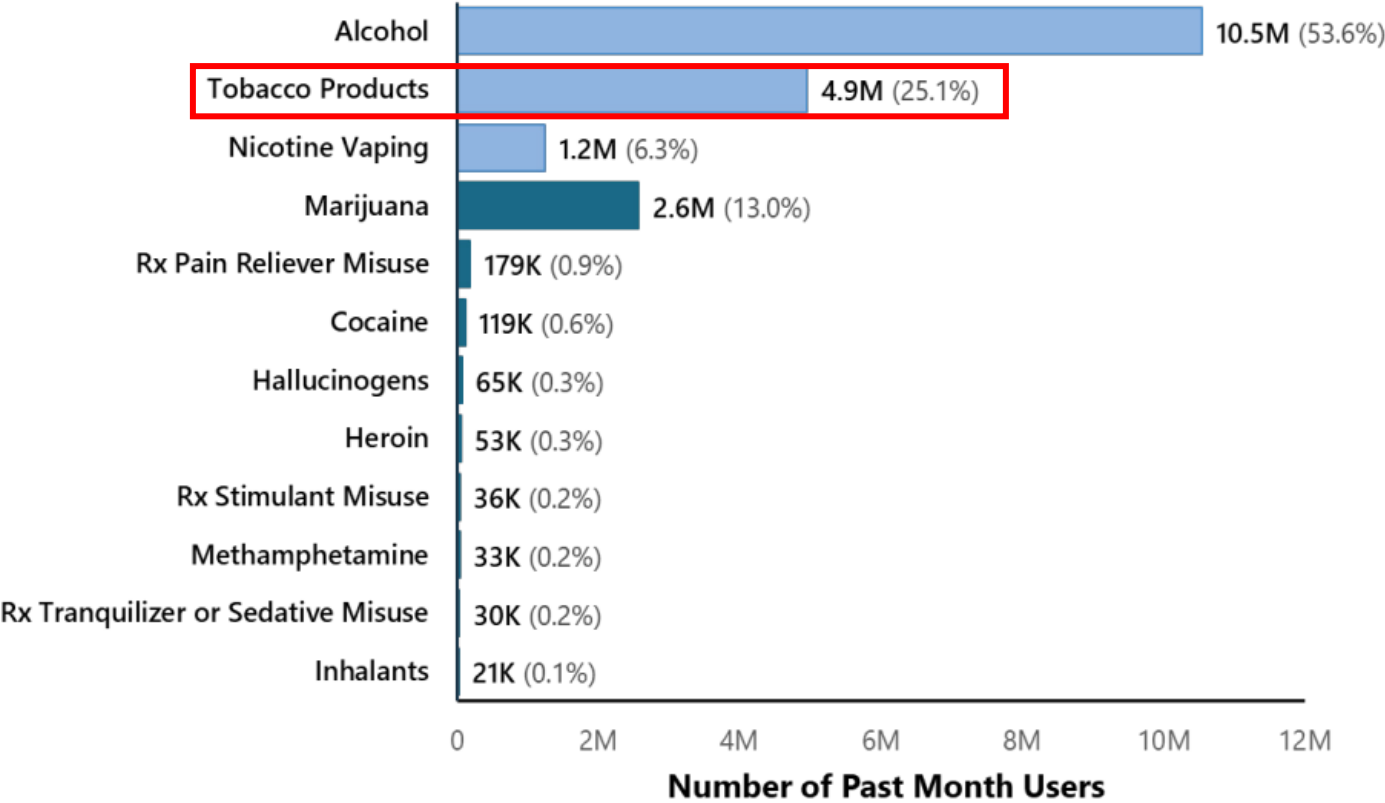




Factors Impacting Veterans Mental Health & Substance Use

Sources: 1) Fivecoat, H. C., Lookatch, S. J., Mavandadi, S., McKay, J. R., & Sayers, S. L. (2023). Social Factors Predict Treatment Engagement in Veterans with PTSD or SUD. *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research*, 50(3), 286-300.; 2) Betancourt, C. A. (2022). *Substance Use Disorders and Mental Health Illnesses Among US Veterans: A Multi-Method Study Using Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods* (Doctoral dissertation, George Mason University). 3) Grisamore, S. P., Nguyen, R. L., Wiedbusch, E. K., Guerrero, M., Cope, C. E., Abo, M. G., & Jason, L. A. (2022). Journey to wellness: A socioecological analysis of veterans in recovery from substance use disorders. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 70(3-4), 394-406.

Past Month Substance Use: Among Veterans Aged 18 or Older (2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health)



Rx = prescription.

Note: The estimated numbers of current users of different substances are not mutually exclusive because people could have used more than one type of substance in the past month.



Opportunities to Promote Tobacco-Free Recovery



Expand Access to Tobacco Cessation Programs: Increase availability and awareness of VA-sponsored tobacco cessation programs, including counseling, nicotine replacement therapy, and prescription medications.



Integrate Tobacco-Free Messaging into Recovery Programs: Embed tobacco cessation education into substance use recovery and mental health treatment to address co-occurring dependencies.



Leverage Peer Support and Veteran Networks: Utilize veteran-led support groups and mentorship programs to encourage tobacco-free lifestyles and provide social reinforcement.



Implement Tobacco-Free Policies in Veteran Facilities: Strengthen tobacco-free policies in VA hospitals, clinics, and housing programs to create supportive environments for quitting tobacco.



Promote Veteran-Specific Cessation Resources: Increase awareness of veteran-focused quit resources like the VA Quitlines and counseling services to provide tailored support for quitting tobacco.

Join the National Networks Today to Learn More!

Join NBHN's listserv for up-to-date information, access to our monthly newsletters, ECHO opportunities and more!



Become a Friend of The Network



Quarterly newsletters
Technical assistance opportunities
Events and more!

[Sign Up Here](#)



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Tobacco Use in Veterans enrolled in VHA & VHA Approach to Treatment

*Dana E. Christofferson, PhD
Deputy Director, Tobacco Use Treatment Program
Veterans Health Administration*

Veterans Health Administration

The nation's largest integrated health care system



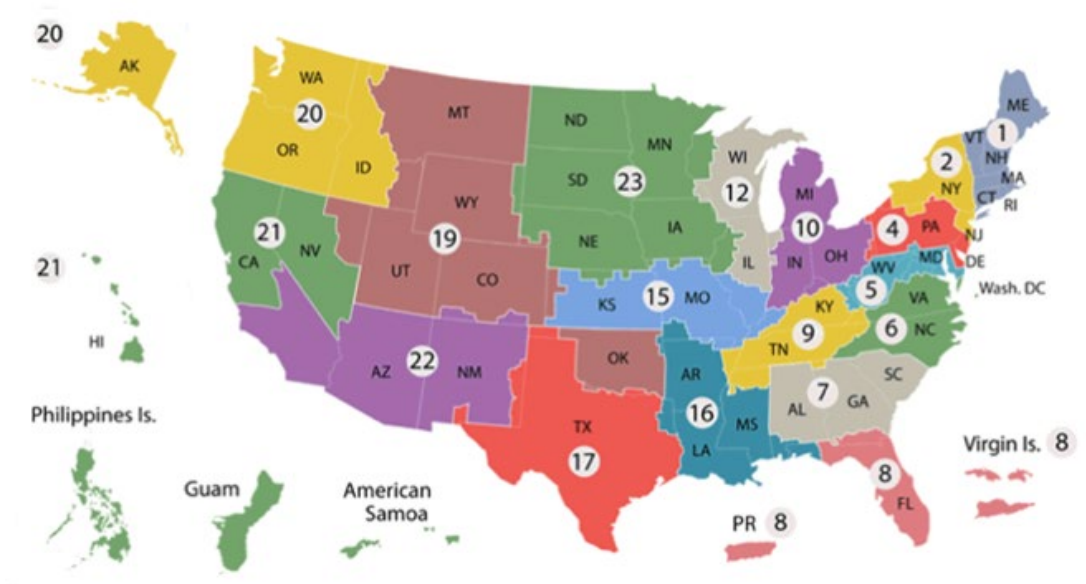
- 1,380 health care facilities
- VHA provides: preventive services, inpatient hospital services, urgent and emergency care, pharmacy services, mental health care, assisted living and home health care, and others
- VHA has special programs for caregivers, homeless Veterans, rural Veterans, and others

Serves 9.1 million enrolled Veterans each year

- Eligibility is based on:
 - Military service history
 - Discharge status
- Enrolled Veterans are assigned a priority group that determines the amount of copayments, if any, they may be charged.
 - Priority group assignment determined by criteria including service-connected disability, military exposures, income

www.va.gov/health/

www.va.gov/health-care/



Veterans enrolled in VA health care

Demographics

10% female

48% 65 or more years old

30% 45 - 64 years old

21% less than 45 years old

Military Service

35% served during the Vietnam era

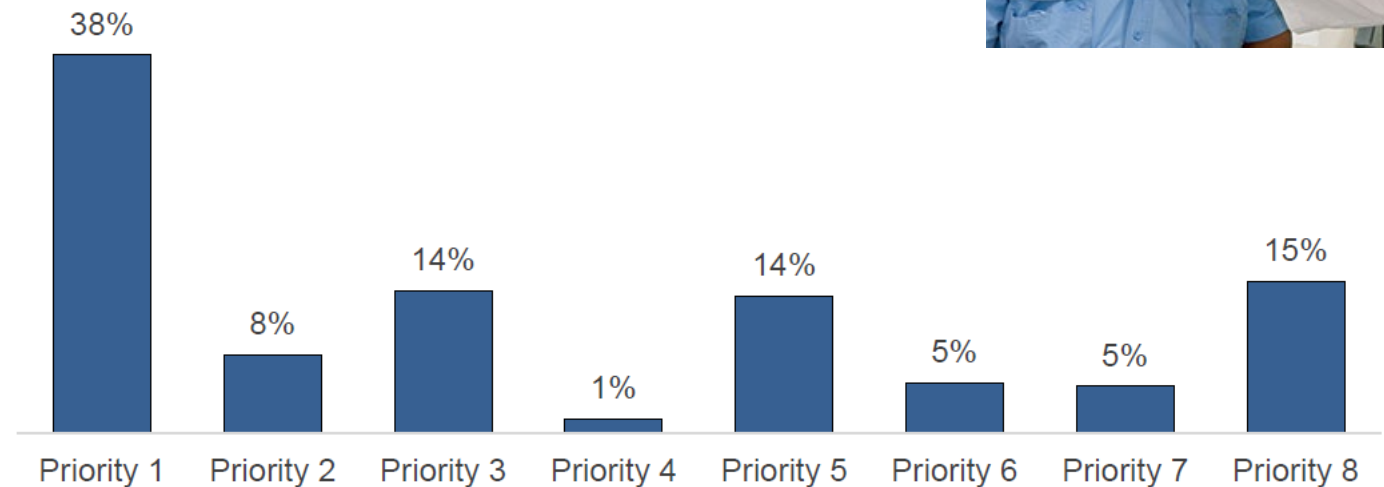
32% served post-Sept 2001

50% reported combat exposure

2023 Survey of Veteran Enrollees' Health and Use of Health Care

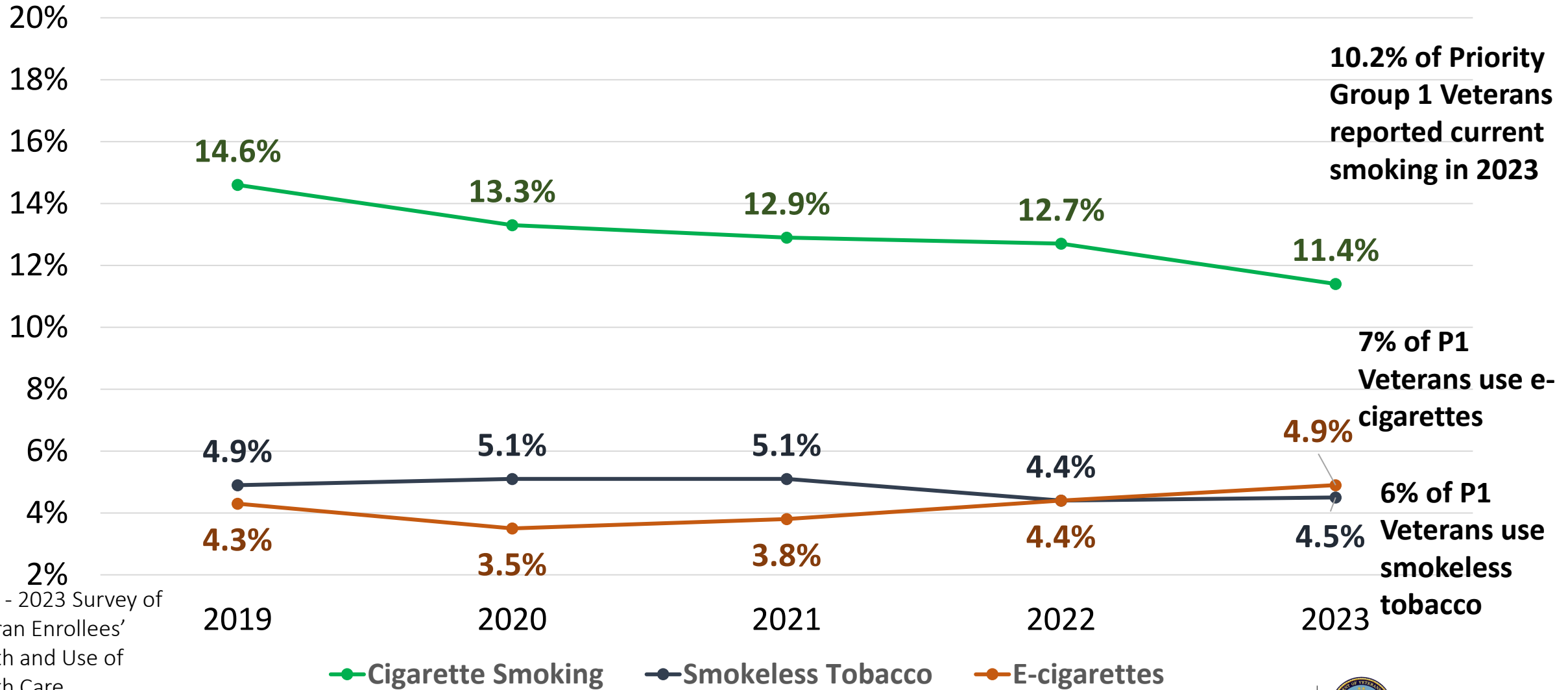


Figure 2-1. Percentage of enrollees by Priority Group

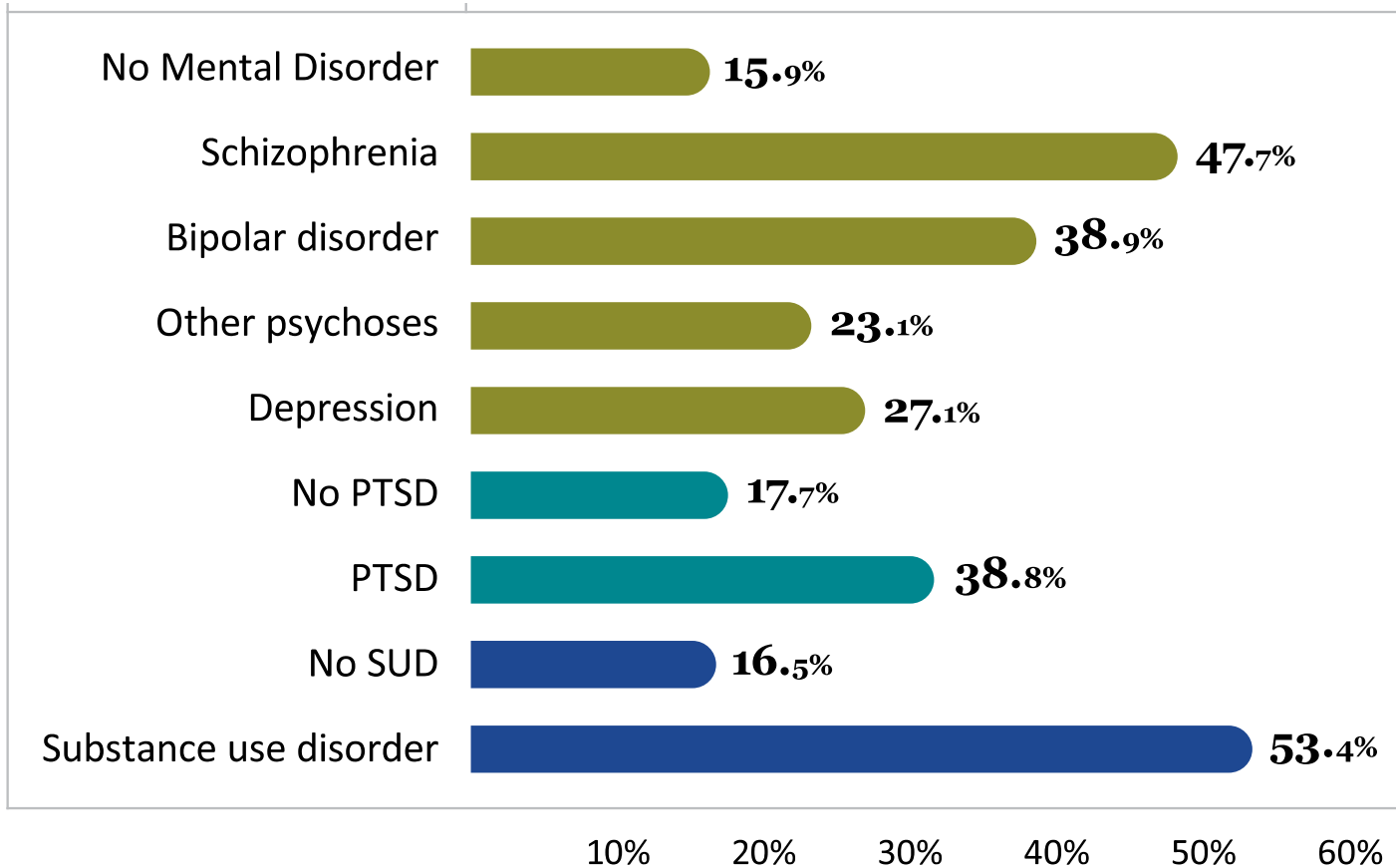


Priority Group 1: Veterans with service-connected disabilities that are 50 percent or more disabling, Veterans determined to be unemployable due to service-connected conditions, and Veterans awarded the Medal of Honor

Veteran Enrollee Reported Tobacco Use, by type



Smoking rate among VA patients with MH or SUD diagnosis



National Survey on Drug Use and Health 2010-2015

48.2% of U.S. Veterans with serious psychological distress currently used tobacco

Odani et al., 2018

A public health approach to tobacco use treatment

Patient/provider level

Promoting delivery of evidence-based care

- Patient/providers workbooks and handbooks
- Provider/patient handouts and information sheets
- Clinical trainings and tools



Population level

Increase reach through telephone and mobile resources

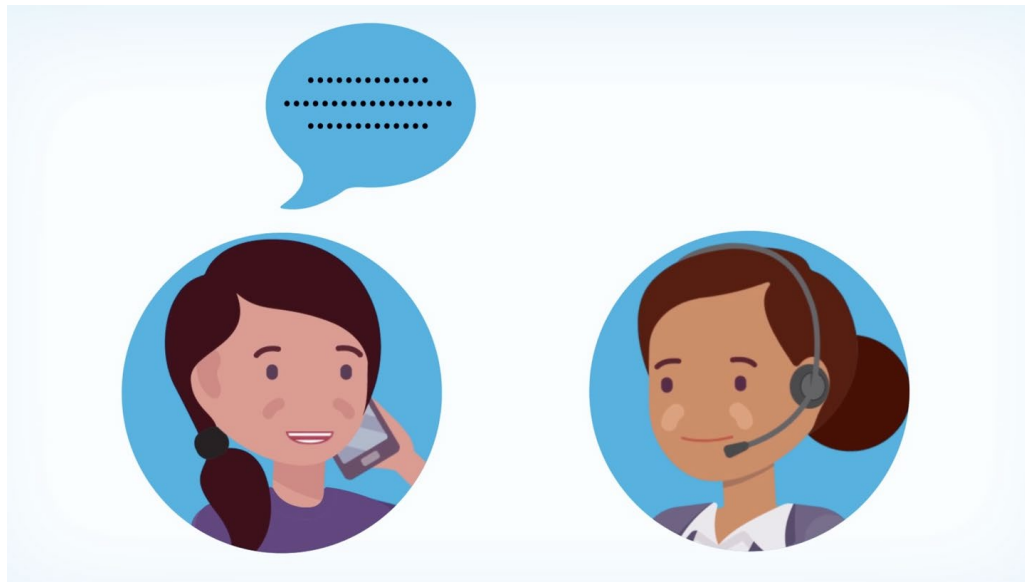
- 1-855-QUIT-VET, proactive telephone quitline
- SmokefreeVET text messaging program
- Stay Quit Coach app



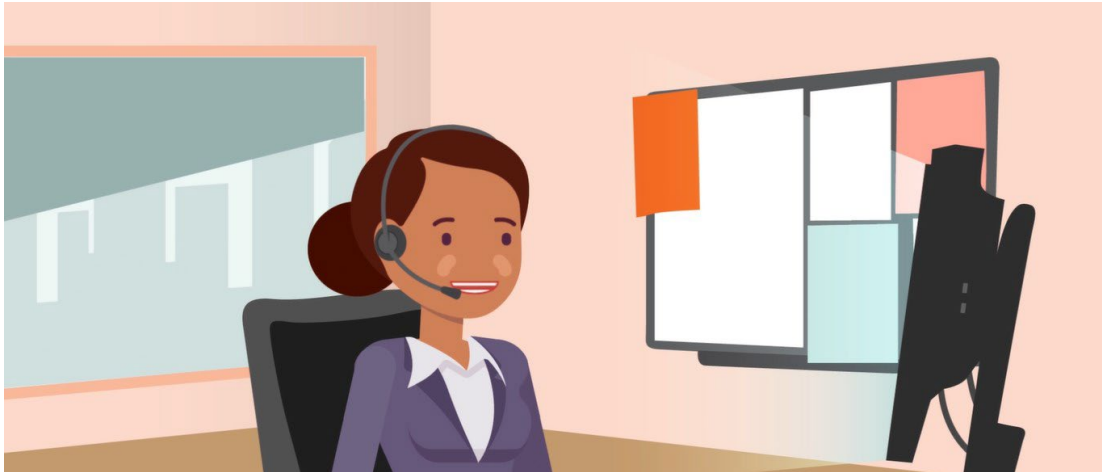
Evidence-based tobacco use treatment

VA Tobacco Use Treatment Program is guided by the US Public Health Service Clinical Practice Guideline *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update* and the US Preventive Services Task Force recommendation for tobacco use treatment (2021).

Veterans in VHA are routinely screened for tobacco use and offered both behavioral counseling and medication



Behavioral Interventions



May be delivered in-person, over the phone, via telehealth, in individual or group formats

May be delivered by many types of health care providers:

- Physicians, nurses, psychologists, psychiatrists, pharmacists, social workers, addiction counselors, and dentists
- Quitline coaches may also deliver counseling over the phone



- Quit VET provides individual, multi-session proactive counseling in English and Spanish free to any Veteran enrolled in VHA
 - Veterans may directly call 1-855-784-8838
 - Providers can eRefer or conduct a warm handoff

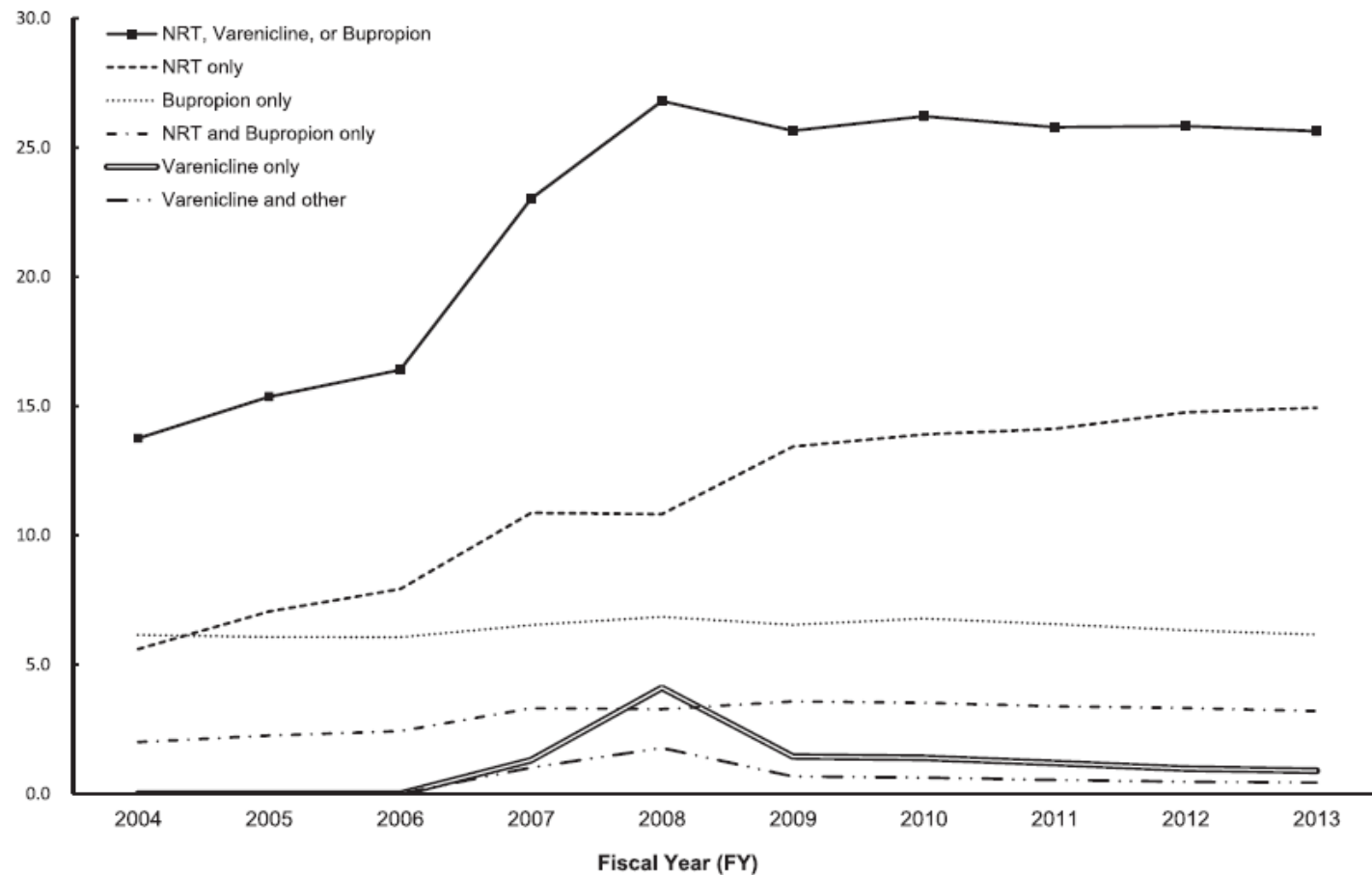


- SmokefreeVET is an automated text message program that offers 6-8 weeks of tailored support, tips and encouragement in English and Spanish
 - Veterans can directly enroll by texting VET to 47848 or visiting smokefree.gov/VET

Use of medications among VHA patients

Use of cessation medications by Veterans in VHA care **increases their odds of quitting** and is cost effective

Duffy et al., 2018; Barnett et al., 2019



Veterans more likely to initiate tobacco cessation medications:

- Most psychiatric disorders
- COPD
- Peripheral vascular disorders
- Younger

Veterans less likely to receive medication:

- Males
- Hispanic
- Schizophrenia

Figure 1. Proportion of current tobacco users initiating tobacco pharmacotherapy FY 2004 to 2013 in VHA

Resources for health care providers

Continuing Education

Military Culture: Core Competencies for Healthcare Professionals

www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/continuing_ed/military_culture_competencies_hcp.asp

VHA TRAIN: free, accredited tobacco use treatment trainings

www.train.org/vha/search?type=course&query=tobacco&cp_organization_id=68

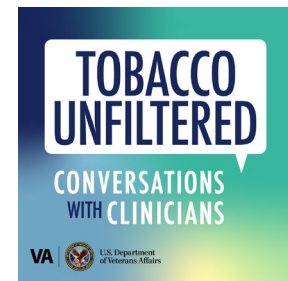
Treatment Guides

Patient workbooks and provider handbooks

www.mentalhealth.va.gov/healthcare-providers/quit-tobacco.asp

Patient information

www.mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco/how-to-quit.asp



Podcast Series

Quit Tobacco

As part of VA's commitment to helping Veterans quit tobacco, we have developed workbooks to help Veterans quit and handbooks to help VA providers with tobacco cessation treatment. Some of these Veteran workbooks and provider handbooks can be used together as you and your patients work on their quit.



[My Tobacco Cessation Workbook: A Resource for Veterans](#)



[Primary Care & Tobacco Cessation Handbook: A Resource for Providers](#)



[Tobacco Cessation: An Abbreviated Mini-Workbook \(English | En Español\)](#)



[My Smoking Cessation Workbook: A Resource for Women](#)



[Women & Smoking Cessation Handbook: A Resource for Providers](#)



[Smokeless Tobacco: A Veteran's Guide for Quitting](#)



[My Smoking Cessation Workbook: A Resource for Patients \(HIV-Focused\)](#)



[HIV Provider Smoking Cessation Handbook](#)

Resources for Veterans

These tools allow Veterans to access tobacco cessation information and treatment anytime, from anywhere:



mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco
Tobacco & Health Internet Site for Veterans



SmokefreeVET
Text messaging cessation program, sign up at smokefree.gov/VET
* For VHA enrollees



1-855-QUIT-VET
Telephone quitline, Veterans can call for counseling from anywhere
* For VHA enrollees



veterans.smokefree.gov
Smokefree.gov Internet Site for Veterans



Stay Quit Coach App
Free mobile app for those trying to reduce or quit cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, and chewing tobacco

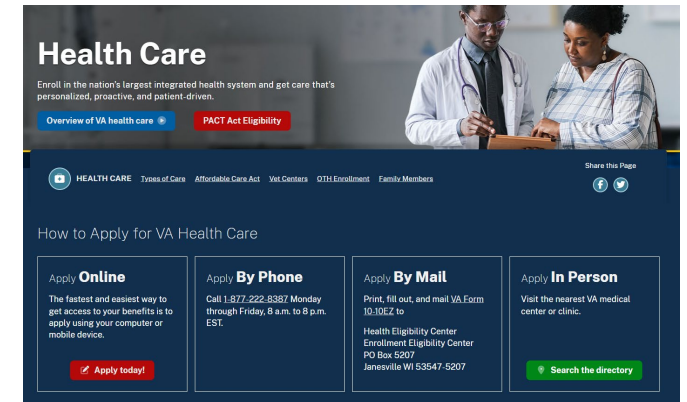
VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

What can you do?

1. Encourage Veterans to enroll in VA care if eligible
www.choose.va.gov/health
2. Share publicly available websites and resources such as
 - Veterans.smokefree.gov
 - Mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco
 - Stay Quit Coach App
 - <https://veterans.smokefree.gov/tools-tips-vet/smokefreevet-partner-toolkit>





VETERAN COMMERCIAL TOBACCO CESSATION

*A Partnership between
WDOH-YCTPP & WDVA Counseling & Wellness*

Paul Caseley, Program Manager

Mission

WDVA's Veteran Commercial Tobacco Cessation Program exists to connect Washington's veterans to resources that help decrease tobacco/nicotine dependence, improve cessation efforts, remove barriers, and increase access to treatment.



Supports WDVA's mission of **"Serving Those Who Served"** and explicitly contributes to the agency's goals of providing **Quality Health Services** and **Responsive Veteran Programs**. The mission of Counseling and Wellness Programs is to transform the lives of veterans and their families through growth and resiliency-related experiences.

Connecting with Veterans & Families

EDUCATION
&
OUTREACH

TRAINING
&
COLLABORATION

ASSESSMENT
&
TREATMENT

Education/Outreach



Veteran Resource Events

Stand Downs



Veteran Service Organizations



Military Bases



Transitional Housing Programs



Higher Education
Vet Corps



Traumatic Brain Injury & Recovery



Veterans Treatment Courts



Training & Collaboration

Vet Corps (higher ed. & veteran service programs) – Provided tobacco cessation training

Veteran Certified Peer Counselors (HCA/WDVA) – Provided tobacco cessation training

WDVA TTS Scholarship (33) Tobacco Treatment Specialist Training –Duke/UNC - Fall '24 & Spring '25

Conference Presentations & Resource Tables: Serving Those Who Served, WA State Public Health; CDC-OSH Awardee Meeting 2024 – Joint Presentation with WDOH/WDVA/North Carolina DHHS/Fort Liberty Public Health; WDOH Quarterly Meetings

Coalitions: Washington Breathes (Improving Cessation Treatment), Cancer Action Plan of Washington (CAPOW), Veteran Commercial Tobacco Cessation, WA State Behavioral Health Workgroup, Smoking Cessation Leadership Academy (UCSF, SCLC)

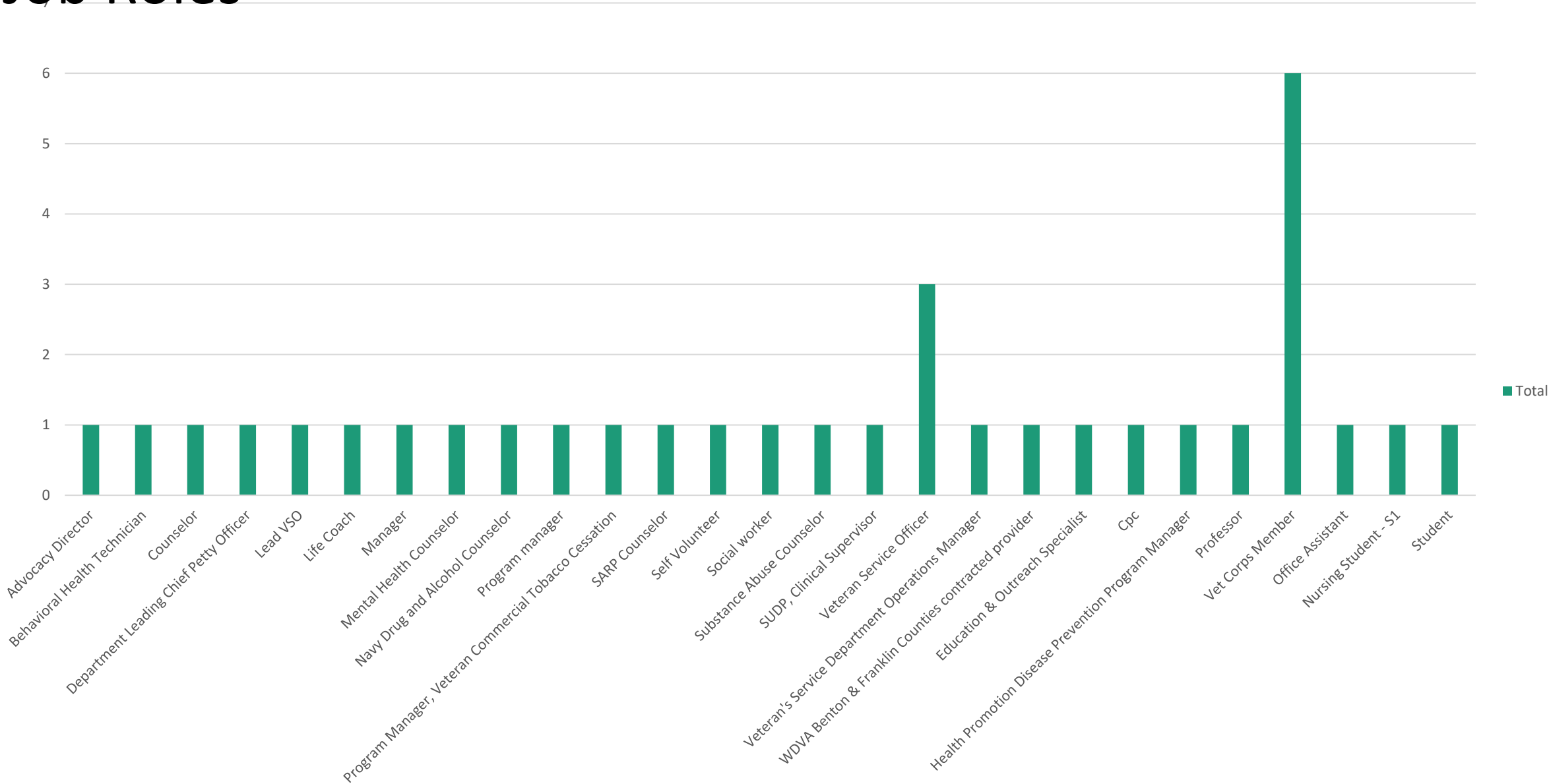
Provider Training: Collaborations with University of Washington, King County Health, Pierce County Health, Naval Hospital Bremerton

WA Counties with Veteran-Facing Tobacco Treatment Specialists



Job Roles

Total



Assessment & Treatment



INTAKE ASSESSMENTS



TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS
ACCESS TO FREE NRT



FOLLOW-UP
COUNSELING

Next Steps

Leverage Partnerships

Support newly trained tobacco treatment specialists with a veteran-centric “Community of practice”

Build coalition capacity & scope/shared leadership
WA State Behavioral Health Workgroup (WDOH)
WA Breathes Coalition

Collaborate with other programs/agencies:
DVA Suicide Prevention, TBI;
HCA, DOH, DSHS, Jr, ROTC

Dept. Commerce grant: “Reducing violence in the home”

Technology

Integrate App technology as alternative treatment option (2MorrowHealth/DOH)

Expansion Other SUDs

SUD research/behavioral health needs assessment
Listening sessions, client feedback on needed supports and program improvements/adjustments

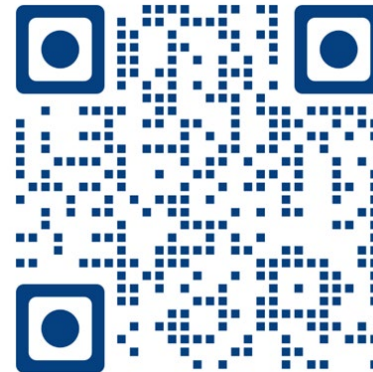
Questions?

Paul Caseley

Email: TobaccoCessation@dva.wa.gov

Cell: (564) 200-2149

Webpage: www.dva.wa.gov/quitsmoking



"Serving Those Who Served"

Q&A



Launching Soon!

Supporting Tobacco-Free Recovery for
Next-Generation Thriving Heroes
(STRENGTH CoP) – A Community of
Practice Supporting the Wellbeing of
Veterans with Disabilities

What is the STRENGTH Community of Practice?

The STRENGTH Community of Practice is a
group designed to help U.S. Veterans with
disabilities quit using tobacco. Together, our
team will collaborate with experts to support
communities in living lives free from tobacco.

STRENGTH Community of Practice



Join the National Networks Today to Learn More!

Join NBHN's listserv for up-to-date information, access to our monthly newsletters, ECHO opportunities and more!



Become a Friend of The Network



Quarterly newsletters
Technical assistance opportunities
Events and more!

[Sign Up Here](#)



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Free 1-800 QUIT NOW Cards

Take Control

1-800-QUIT-NOW

Call. It's free. It works.

1-800-784-8669

For details on your state services, go to: <http://map.naquitline.org>



- ✓ Refer your clients to cessation services

Post Webinar Information

- Please provide feedback by completing our evaluation at the end of this webinar
- You will receive the following in our post webinar email:
 - Webinar recording
 - Instructions on how to claim FREE CME/CEUs
 - Information on certificates of attendance
 - Transcript of the presentation
 - Other resources as needed
- All information will be posted on our website at SmokingCessationLeadership.ucsf.edu



Save the Date! SCLC's Next Event

It's About a Billion Lives Annual Symposium

Friday, April 11, 2025 | 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Robertson Auditorium, UCSF Mission Bay campus.

This is an in-person symposium.

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