



Vaya Health Behavioral Health and
Intellectual/Developmental Disability Tailored Plan

TOBACCO CESSATION PLAN

June 1, 2025

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Introduction

Vaya Health's goal for all tobacco cessation initiatives and activities is to decrease tobacco use by members and recipients enrolled in our Behavioral Health and Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD) Tailored Plan (Tailored Plan). Tobacco use is the top preventable cause of death among individuals with behavioral health disorders. People with co-occurring behavioral health disorders and tobacco use disorder lose an average of 25 years of their lives due to tobacco use and represent half of the annual deaths from tobacco in the United States, despite representing only a quarter of the population.

Positive effects of tobacco cessation in the behavioral health population include:

- Increased likelihood of long-term abstinence from other drugs (for people who have a substance use disorder)
- Improved mood and anxiety symptoms similar to anti-depressant treatment
- Mitigation of increased risk of suicidality in youth who use tobacco

Education and Marketing

As outlined in **Table 1.**, Vaya uses a multifaceted approach to ensure members receive ongoing tobacco cessation education and resources. This approach includes education for members, recipients, contracted providers, and Vaya staff.

All Vaya members and recipients receive a Member Handbook or Recipient Handbook, each of which includes information on the health risks of tobacco use and where to find additional information that supports efforts to reduce or stop tobacco use. The Vaya website also links to Quit for Life and other online resources that members, their families and community stakeholders may easily access at any time. Linking to Quit for Life allows users to engage in active planning for their health. It includes a feature called "Create My Quit Plan," a tool to develop tobacco cessation plans.

Starting January 1, 2027, Vaya will require all Medicaid providers to implement a tobacco free policy across all their campuses. The tobacco-free policy shall include a prohibition on smoking combustible products and the use of non-combustible tobacco products, such as electronic, heated, and smokeless tobacco products, and nicotine products not approved by the FDA as tobacco use treatment medications. A tobacco-free policy also includes prohibition on contracted providers purchasing, accepting as donations, or distributing tobacco products to members they serve. This tobacco-free policy requirement does not apply to retail pharmacies; properties where no direct clinical services are provided; non-emergency medical transport; alternative family living settings; or manufacturing sites that employ adults who receive group day services; however, there is nothing preventing these providers from implementing a tobacco-free policy.

Vaya maximizes the resources of our provider network to ensure members have many opportunities to access information about tobacco cessation. Our contracts with network providers require providers to post signage at their offices informing patients and guests that provider campuses are tobacco-free and how to access the support of Quit for Life. Network providers are also required to include information about tobacco cessation resources on their provider websites.

Vaya requires all contracted providers to assess members and recipients for tobacco use when administering a Comprehensive Clinical Assessment (CCA) or during annual physical exams (for members only). We ensure all contracted providers offer evidence-based tobacco screening and treatment. If a member is identified as a tobacco user, providers offer tobacco cessation counseling, as well as written educational materials on the health benefits of reducing tobacco use. Additionally, providers are required to make these printed materials available in their office lobby and on their website for others to access.

Tailored Care Managers evaluate tobacco use and exposure in their assessments and discuss the inclusion of cessation goals in care plans with the members. These goals may include encouraging members to speak with their behavioral health and primary care providers about tobacco use reduction or cessation.

Table 1. Tobacco Cessation Marketing and Education Resources

Sources of Member Education and Marketing	Availability
Vaya Health Member Handbook and Recipient Handbook	Provided to members and recipients upon enrollment in a Vaya health plan
Vaya website	Available to members, recipients, and providers
Websites of contracted provider	Available to members and recipients
Flyers and member education materials posted in contracted providers' lobby areas	Available to members and recipients attending in-person appointments
Quit for Life website and materials	Made available through online and in-person marketing materials
Annual Tobacco Cessation Campaign	Annual campaign targeted to all Vaya members and recipients

Prevention

Vaya conducts direct and indirect tobacco prevention campaigns to reduce tobacco use across the Tailored Plan population, to include:

- An annual tobacco cessation campaign providing education and information to all Tailored Plan members and recipients
- Contracts with designated Substance Abuse Block Grant and Prevention providers to deliver local, community-based tobacco cessation education across the Vaya region

Tobacco Screening and Assessment

Plan- and provider-based Tailored Care Managers in Vaya's network conducts tobacco screenings. Vaya also contractually requires our providers, including inpatient and facility-based service providers, to screen for tobacco use and provide tobacco cessation education and referrals as appropriate. Screenings may occur through Tailored Care Management comprehensive assessments, behavioral health CCAs, inpatient admission assessments, facility-based intake assessments and/or annual primary care visits. Vaya network providers who conduct tobacco screenings and assessments will refer members in need of tobacco cessation services to a provider of Standard of Care Tobacco Cessation Treatment by completing and submitting the tobacco

cessation provider's referral form. In addition, providers of SU inpatient and facility-based crisis (FBC) services will initiate Standard of Care Treatment within the inpatient or FBC setting and refer members to a Vaya network provider for continuation of tobacco cessation services following discharge.

Members and recipients who receive Vaya's plan-based Care Management participate in a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) that includes questions related to tobacco use and exposure. The HRA assesses both first- and secondhand exposure to tobacco products. Responses to the HRA will trigger a more comprehensive nicotine and vaping questionnaire, which assesses for using cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, vaping and second- and third-hand smoke exposure. For child and adolescent members, Vaya Care Managers ask additional customized questions about vaping and other routes of tobacco use. Provider-based Care Managers should assess for the same as indicated in their contracts and/or the Provider Operations Manual.

For members who have elected to participate in care coordination, Vaya administers a Care Needs Screening that includes screening for tobacco use.

Care Plans and Individual Support Plans (ISP)

Vaya encourages care planning teams to address tobacco use/ exposure needs identified in screenings and assessments in all care plans/ISPs as appropriate for the needs and preferences of each member and recipient as indicated in the Tailored Care Management Provider Manual. Vaya's staff and provider training includes instruction about motivational interviewing, which increases the likelihood that members and recipients can accurately identify their goals for tobacco cessation. Depending on the use/exposure identified and the member's preference, Vaya and provider staff will implement various methods of education, coaching and referral.

Treatment Use and Expansion

Vaya employs strategies to reduce barriers to accessing medication and counseling and will facilitate accessible, effective resources to help members and recipients quit using tobacco. **Vaya does not require prior authorization for tobacco cessation counseling.** We incorporate value-based care incentives to increase the use of billing code 90791 YG (see "Value-Based Incentives" below). We also increase specificity of our tobacco use and exposure assessments and ensure care plans incorporate assessment results with targeted interventions, refer members to specialized behavioral health tobacco programs and require tobacco-free campuses at all provider network facilities. Members and recipients may self-refer to our tobacco cessation programs, or Vaya identifies members and recipients who may need tobacco cessation support through the screening and assessment processes, along with claims data analysis.

Additionally, we work to:

- Promote tobacco-free public spaces for our region's communities
- Continue our partnership with the N.C. Tobacco Prevention and Control Branch to promote access to educational opportunities addressing tobacco use.

Vaya’s plan-based Tailored Care Management program addresses the risk of vaping in our clinical pharmacist review process. All adolescent and young adult members and recipients who are referred for pharmacist review are evaluated for vaping risks and resources are recommended as clinically appropriate.

Value-Based Incentives

In line with Vaya’s growing focus on population health and health outcomes, we plan to continue expanding tobacco cessation initiatives to reduce detrimental effects on member physical and mental health. One key method entails building capacity for providers to incentivize tobacco cessation among members, thereby creating multiple opportunities for population-based payments.

Initially, Vaya incentivizes providers through a pay-for-reporting model. This model includes adding a local modifier to assessment codes to better track tobacco use among Tailored Plan members. Vaya provides a higher rate for any assessment code billed with the tobacco modifier and collects data over a two-year period to establish a baseline of Tailored Plan members using tobacco products. Additionally, this data allows us to provide information to practices, providers, and departments to drive overall population health, increasing our ability to develop quality improvement activities that incorporate performance metrics to measure direct impacts of interventions on health outcomes.

In years three and four, Vaya will use data collected over the first two years to establish performance metrics for engagement with tobacco cessation counseling. We will use these metrics to increase engagement in tobacco counseling services and improve overall health outcomes. From year three to year four, Vaya will re-evaluate our initial benchmark and reset our performance metrics to drive provider performance. The Vaya value-based tobacco cessation model is illustrated in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Value-Based Tobacco Cessation Model

Implementation Timeline	Performance Type	Performance Payment
Contract Years One and Two	Pay for reporting	Vaya will pay an enhanced rate for all assessment claims billed with the local tobacco modifier.
Contract Years Three and Four	Performance incentive	Vaya will issue an incentive payment for all providers that reach the tobacco cessation engagement benchmark.

Specialized Programs

Tobacco Cessation Behavioral Health Program

Through Quit for Life, Vaya offers an intensive Tobacco Cessation Behavioral Health Program for members who use tobacco and have a behavioral health diagnosis. Among other benefits, this program includes a team of dedicated coaches with extensive training about mental illness and tobacco use treatment. Quit for Life coaches adjust interventions and tailor treatment to meet participant needs. This 12-week program includes nicotine replacement therapy in the form of nicotine patches, with nicotine gum or lozenges available as

supplements to reduce cravings. Members can access the program using a link on our website. Quit for Life conducts eligibility screening for the program.

Tobacco Cessation Pregnancy Program

Quitting tobacco during pregnancy and while living at home with young children has positive impacts on infants and children, including:

- Promoting healthier brain development
- Lowering risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Lowering risk of being born too small or too early
- Lowering risk of coughs, colds, and ear infections
- Lowering risk of asthma
- Lowering risk of cancer, diabetes, and heart disease in adulthood

Through Quit for Life, Vaya offers a special program for women planning or experiencing a pregnancy and new mothers who use tobacco products (including vaping). Members can access this program through the same webpage as our other tobacco cessation services. When a member calls Quit for Life, they are screened and paired with an expert “quit coach” trained to provide specific interventions for pregnant women. Members and recipients are also referred to the program “You Quit Two Quit,” a guide to help new mothers stay tobacco-free. Vaya is partnering with Optum to offer the Pregnancy Quit Line Protocol and will consider providing incentives for member engagement once planning has been finalized.

Provider Training

All provider training and educational materials, including the operation and objectives of all prevention and population health programs, will be available in the Provider Learning Lab section of the Vaya website. Specifically, we provide education on Quit for Life and other evidence-based tobacco cessation resources. We developed an enhanced tobacco cessation questionnaire template available to contracted providers as part of our training program. Vaya also communicates updates through Provider Communication Bulletins, topic-specific memos, provider webinars, training materials on the Vaya website, and specialized learning communities.

Higher Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) scores are strongly associated with high-risk health behaviors in adulthood, including tobacco use. Higher ACE scores also correlate with a shortened lifespan and chronic conditions such as depression, heart disease, cancer, and chronic lung disease. We continually provide resources and information to our provider network on trauma-informed care through webinars, training, and toolkits. Addressing trauma in this way gives members and recipients the best chance of deciding to stop using tobacco or deciding not to begin using tobacco.

Annual Report and Outcomes Monitoring

As part of the Tobacco Free policy that is launching on July 1, 2025, Vaya will monitor provider compliance with the policy through member grievance reporting. Using the methods described throughout this plan, Vaya also works collaboratively with providers and Tailored Care Managers, and directly with members and

recipients, to increase awareness of tobacco-related diseases, the benefits of being tobacco-free, and available services and benefits. In addition, we recognize the need to continue reducing tobacco use among members and recipients with serious mental illness (SMI), serious emotional disturbance (SED), substance use disorder (SUD), I/DD and/or traumatic brain injury (TBI). Therefore, we will continue to work to collect baseline data to develop outcome measures for each of the population groups listed above.

Vaya’s Quality Management Department will monitor all targets and National Quality Forum (NQF) quality measures identified in **Table 4.** on an ongoing basis. These outcomes will be shared internally with Vaya’s Quality Improvement Committee and externally with interested stakeholders. Additionally, Vaya will produce an annual report outlining the successes and areas for growth across our region and within the Tailored Plan population.

Table 4. Proposed Quality Measures

NQF	Quality Measure
#0027	Medical Assistance with Smoking and Tobacco Use Cessation