Providing Technical Assistance for Effective Tobacco Cessation Policies

In September 2013, the American Lung Association was awarded a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide technical assistance to states and the tobacco control community on tobacco cessation coverage policy and health systems change.

Tobacco cessation coverage policies concern what treatments health insurance plans (public, like Medicaid, or private, like an HMO) provide tobacco users who want to quit. The U.S. Public Health Service Guideline recommends that plans cover all seven FDA-approved medications and all three forms of evidence-based counseling to help tobacco users quit. Health systems change to support tobacco cessation involves changes to systems (like hospitals, physician practices, health centers) that increase the number of tobacco users who are: (1) Identified and recorded as tobacco users or exposed to secondhand smoke, (2) Given and/or referred to treatment for tobacco cessation, and (3) Followed up to assess success in treatment. Recent federal initiatives such as the Affordable Care Act and Meaningful Use and technological advances such as electronic health records have made these topics even more important in helping tobacco users quit.

Project Goal: Increase the capacity of the tobacco control, public health, and health care provider communities to take action to (1) increase tobacco cessation coverage and (2) promote health systems change to reduce tobacco use.

Some of the project outcomes include:

- Increase the number of states that cover a comprehensive tobacco cessation benefit through Medicaid, Medicaid expansion and State Health Insurance Marketplaces
- Help state- and local-level staff take inventory of what tobacco cessation treatments are covered in their states for various populations
- Increase the number of patients who are screened for tobacco use/secondhand smoke exposure and receive cessation interventions
- Help health care providers and health care systems adopt tobacco/secondhand smoke screening and cessation intervention measures in electronic health medical records

Project Activities

As part of this project, the American Lung Association, in collaboration with the American Academy of Pediatrics, plans to lead several activities – all of which will involve many partners in the tobacco control, public health, and health care provider fields and health care systems. The following are some of the ways you can be involved:

- **Take the needs assessment survey** to tell us what cessation policy topics you are interested in working on, what materials and training you need, and how we can help you.
- **Join a work group** – Work groups will focus on specific topics, like Medicaid coverage and electronic health records. They will consist of national experts as well as state-and local-level professionals who are committed to working on change in that area.
- **Join a listserv** – Listservs will focus on topics like tobacco cessation in state marketplaces and tobacco and Meaningful Use. They will foster communication and networking among colleagues interested in and working on these issues across the country. Also join the listservs to hear about opportunities for webinar trainings, new materials, factsheets and reports on tobacco cessation policy.

If you are interested in participating in this project, please visit [www.lung.org/cessationta](http://www.lung.org/cessationta) for more information (and continue to check back), and send an email to cessationta@lung.org to join our email list.

We will distribute future information about the project through this email list.