

Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable disease and death in New York State. More than a half million New Yorkers live with serious smoking-caused illnesses and disabilities¹. Nearly 17% of New Yorkers are smokers². Smoking is still the leading cause of preventable death in New York City. Of the 1.1 million current smokers in New York City, about three fourths (781,000) have a regular health care provider. Expanding medical training and support may help to reach this group of smokers³.

Of an estimated total of 3.08 billion visits during 2005–2008 made by adults (aged 18 and older), about 63% included tobacco screening. Among the patients who were classified as current tobacco users, 20.9% received tobacco counseling during their physician visit. Even after being identified as a smoker, these patients are not receiving the recommended counseling. Among the patients who were identified as current tobacco users, 7.6% received a prescription or an order for a medication associated with tobacco cessation⁴.

Smokers cite a physician's advice to quit as an important motivator for attempting to stop smoking. These data suggest that most smokers are interested in quitting, clinicians and health systems are in frequent contact with smokers, and clinicians have high credibility with smokers. Unfortunately, clinicians and health systems do not capitalize on this opportunity consistently⁵. Even when doctors provide brief simple advice about quitting smoking, this increases the likelihood that someone who smokes will successfully quit and remain a nonsmoker 12 months later. More intensive advice may result in slightly higher rates of quitting⁶.

¹ https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/tobacco_control/

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. State-Specific Prevalence of Current Cigarette Smoking and Smokeless Tobacco Use Among Adults Aged ≥18 Years — United States, 2011–2013. *MMWR* May 22, 2015;64 (19):[532-536].

³ Jasek J, Ellis JA, VanWye G, Kerker B, Perl SB. Who's Still Smoking? Cigarette Use Among Adults In New York City. *NYC Vital Signs* 2007, 6(2): 1–4

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Tobacco Use Screening and Counseling During Physician Office Visits Among Adults — National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey and National Health Interview Survey, United States, 2005–2009. *MMWR* 2012;61(Suppl; June 15, 2012):[38-45].

⁵ Fiore MC, Jaén CR, Baker TB, et al. Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update. Clinical Practice Guideline. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service. May 2008.

⁶ Stead LF, Buitrago D, Preciado N, Sanchez G, Hartmann-Boyce J, Lancaster T. Physician advice for smoking cessation. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev*. 2013 May 31