

Barriers, Solutions, and Resources for In-Office Tobacco Cessation Counseling

Purpose: Determine barriers to dentists and physicians providing in-office tobacco cessation counseling, brainstorm solutions, and provide resources.

Background: Smoking and other types of tobacco use cause or exacerbate several oral health issues, such as bad breath, stained tongue and teeth, gum disease, bleeding or receding gums, impaired taste and smell, delayed healing from surgery, and oral cancer.

Hypotheses: (1) Dentists and doctors wish to provide cessation counseling, but face time, reimbursement, and other barriers; (2) Dentists and doctors can offer viable solutions to these barriers given adequate resources.

Methods: 6 dental and 6 primary care practices will be recruited to participate in focus groups.

Survey Results: 87 dental and medical professionals (doctors, dentists, nurses, hygienists, assistants, and office personnel) participated. Of these, 66 (76%) were in Bexar County. 25 (29%) participated in some type of in-office tobacco cessation counseling with patients. Only 11 (13%) knew that practices could bill for these services, and only 7 (8%) had actually billed for it.

Focus Group Responses			
Patient Attitudes	Provider Attitudes	Logistics	Resources
Barriers			
Annoyed Frustrated Angry Evasive	Discomfort Frustration Sense of futility "It's not my place"	Staff Charting Follow-up Medication monitoring Billing	Commercial Not all patients literate Internet access
Resources & Solutions			
Develop a rapport Connect to primary complaint	Education Training Counseling "scripts"	Designated staff Specific billing/coding information	Non-commercial Spanish-language Plain-language Personalized

Future Steps: This information will be used to create tobacco cessation kits based on dentists' and doctors' real-life concerns and requests.