



Quitline Iowa Fax Referral Program

This program is designed to help improve the health and well-being of Iowans by helping smokers quit and remain smoke free by increasing the number of individuals who receive smoking cessation counseling. Health care providers can play a critical role in this effort by referring their patients who smoke to **Quitline Iowa**, a statewide, toll-free telephone smoking cessation counseling service. The fax referral program gives health care providers a quick and easy method for referring their patients who smoke to effective cessation services. After identifying a patient's tobacco use status, providers can have patients fill out a simple form indicating their consent to receive cessation services, then fax the form to **Quitline Iowa** for cessation counseling and follow-up.

Why Quitline Iowa?

A study published in the October 2002 New England Journal of Medicine has shown that smokers who receive telephone counseling are twice as likely to stay smoke free as those who try to quit on their own.

Quitline Iowa provides evidence-based, culturally competent smoking cessation services to all Iowans. We also triage to other services, including local programs, if the Quitline is not the best option for an individual. We do the screening and initial assessment, then connect patients with appropriate Quitline services or refer them to community services.

How Do Health Care Providers Benefit?

The Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) guidelines for clinicians recommend that health care providers assess a patient's smoking status and provide cessation assistance using the "5 A's" approach—Ask, Advise, Assess, Assist and Arrange follow-up. However, limited time and resources, as well as lack of information on available community services, may pose barriers to health care providers' ability to provide smoking cessation assistance to their patients who smoke. The fax referral program gives health care providers an opportunity to outsource the time-consuming steps of assistance and follow-up in the "5 A's" to a telephone smoking cessation service, which would alleviate some of the problems posed by lack of time and resources.

Why Fax Referral?

Research indicates that physician referral of patients to smoking cessation programs is associated with a significantly higher participation rate than simply telling patients they should stop smoking. Using the fax referral form to refer patients to **Quitline Iowa** for smoking cessation counseling, information and referral to other resources gives health care providers a quick and easy way to direct their patients who smoke to an effective smoking cessation program, while getting an immediate commitment from their patients to make an attempt to quit smoking.

Fax referral also will relieve patients of the responsibility of initiating services, as **Quitline Iowa** will make the initial contact after receiving the fax referral form. Such proactive counseling may increase participation rates, as patients won't have to take the difficult step of making the first call.

