



## Receipt of Advice to Quit Smoking in Medicare Managed Care - United States, 1998

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Office on Smoking and Health  
(770) 488-5493

- # Older smokers are at greater risk for smoking-related disease such as cardiovascular disease, stroke, cancer, and respiratory disease.
- # In 1998, the prevalence of daily cigarette smoking was 36.7 percent among Medicare managed care enrollees aged 55-64, 15.1 percent among persons aged 65-74, 9.1 percent among persons aged 75-84, and 4.5 percent among persons aged 85 and older.
- # Medicare managed care enrollees are more likely to visit a physician or health care provider than other smokers; however, only 71 percent of older smokers receive advice to quit smoking.
- # For those enrolled in the Medicare managed care plan, who reported any smoking in the past 12 months, the receipt of advice to quit increased with the number of visits to physicians or health care providers. An estimated 61.5 percent who made at least one visit in the past 12 months reported receiving advice to quit, while 76.2 percent who made five or more visits received advice to quit.
- # African Americans (67.8 percent) and Hispanics (65.4 percent) who are enrolled in the Medicare managed care plan were less likely to receive advice to quit compared to whites (72.2 percent). However, Asian Pacific Islanders (54 percent) reported receiving less advice than all racial/ethnic groups in Medicare managed care. For both Hispanic and Asian Americans, language barriers may play an important role in the lower rates of receiving advice to quit from physicians and health care providers.
- # Smokers aged 75 and older, who are enrolled in the Medicare managed care plan, were less likely to receive advice to quit smoking than younger smokers despite the health benefits they would experience if they quit. Those with a household income of less than \$10,000 were also less likely to receive advice to quit.
- # Tobacco-use treatment guidelines published by the Public Health Service provides a blueprint for health care professionals and health insurance providers in implementing appropriate medical services that will help treat nicotine addiction. The recently released U.S. Surgeon General's Report, "*Reducing Tobacco Use*," provides further evidence that physicians' advise to quit smoking can produce cessation rates of 5% to 10% per year. Combining behavioral counseling and pharmacologic treatment can produce quit rates of 20-25% in one year.
- # Increasing delivery of smoking cessation advice to 90 percent of Medicare recipients who still smoke could encourage an additional 25,000 smokers to quit each year.
- # Behavior change such as smoking cessation, even late in life, reduces mortality, and can result in improved and enhanced quality of life for older smokers.

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For more information, visit CDC's Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>.