



**EMBARGOED UNTIL:**

4:00 AM (EST), November 13, 2008

**CONTACT:** Heather Grzelka

202-715-3450

[hgrzelka@lungusadc.org](mailto:hgrzelka@lungusadc.org)

**Quitting Smoking Saves Lives and Money:  
New American Lung Association Report Finds Most States  
Failing to Adequately Protect Residents and Their Bottom Line**

**--Treatments and Services Provided by Each State  
to Help Smokers Quit Now Available at [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)--**

Washington, D.C. [Embargoed Until 4:00 AM (EST), November 13, 2008] — If you smoke, quitting can save you money as well as your life. However, where you live can help or hurt your ability to quit. According to a new report, *Helping Smokers Quit: State Cessation Coverage*, released today by the American Lung Association, states are missing a big opportunity to help smokers quit and to save themselves money by covering comprehensive tobacco treatments.

“Millions of dollars and countless lives could be saved each year if more smokers quit,” said Bernadette Toomey, President and CEO of the American Lung Association. “Smoking’s devastating toll in death and suffering is well known. Nearly every family has been touched by tobacco-related illness. But what’s less known is the tremendous burden that treating these ailments places on our economy. States cannot continue to ignore this unfortunate reality.”

Recent studies estimate that lifetime savings in tobacco-related health expenditures for every former smoker total more than \$20,000. Furthermore, employers and insurance plans could save up to \$210 per year for every covered smoker who quits. For each pregnant woman who quits smoking, there is a potential cost savings to the U.S. health care system of \$881 with each premature birth prevented.

“One adult in five smokes; that’s more than 43 million Americans,” said Toomey. “Helping smokers quit benefits us all— smokers and nonsmokers alike. Unfortunately, many smokers lack access to the tools needed to help them succeed. Providing these treatments and tools as a fully-covered, comprehensive insurance benefit increases the willingness of smokers to try to quit and improves their likelihood of success.”

The American Lung Association calls upon each state to provide all Medicaid recipients and state employees with comprehensive, easily-accessible tobacco cessation medications and counseling. The Lung Association recommends states eliminate artificial barriers such as co-pays, limits on the length of treatment and prior authorization requirements that can make it harder for smokers to get the help

they need. Eliminating these barriers is critically important for people with limited incomes, because they create obstacles that greatly discourage these smokers from getting the help they need.

The Lung Association recommends that private insurance plans should also offer comprehensive cessation coverage and encourages states to require all insurance companies to cover these treatments. To date, only eight states (California, Colorado, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota and Rhode Island) have enacted legislative or regulatory standards mandating private health insurance companies to provide cessation coverage.

Comprehensive coverage requires providing open access to the seven cessation medications and three forms of counseling recommended to treat nicotine addiction by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). These medications include over-the-counter and prescription nicotine-replacement-therapies and two non-nicotine prescription drugs: bupropion, varenicline. According to HHS, counseling should include at least four individual, group or telephone therapy sessions lasting no less than 10 minutes each.

“Smoking is widely recognized as a disease of nicotine addiction,” said Norman Edelman, M.D., Chief Medical Officer for the American Lung Association. “Just like any other health condition, patients respond differently to various tobacco cessation treatments. Most smokers try to quit more than once and may need to try different treatments in subsequent attempts. States must make it easier for smokers to access all recommended treatments. There is no one size fits all therapy.”

Presently, only seven states provide comprehensive coverage for Medicaid recipients: Indiana, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon and Pennsylvania. Six states do not cover cessation treatments for Medicaid recipients: Alabama, Connecticut, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee. Among the states that provide Medicaid coverage for tobacco cessation treatments, most impose artificial barriers to coverage including sometimes costly co-pays and limitations on the duration of treatments.

Just six states provide comprehensive cessation coverage for state employees. Those states are Alabama, Illinois, Maine, Nevada, North Dakota and New Mexico. Beyond that, 38 states cover at least some cessation medications, leaving much room for needed improvement.

“The American Lung Association is committed to helping smokers quit,” said Toomey. “We offer several free or low cost services such as our Freedom From Smoking Program that helps thousands of people quit smoking each year. Still, this is by no means a substitute for the kind of support that is urgently needed from each and every state across the country.”

Information on American Lung Association cessation services, including our Freedom from Smoking program, can be accessed by calling the Lung Helpline at 1-800-LUNGUSA or by visiting [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org).

The new *Helping Smokers Quit: State Cessation Coverage* report also provides an index of cessation services and treatments offered in each state. This information can be found by visiting [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org).

**About the American Lung Association:** Beginning our second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to prevent lung disease and promote lung health. Lung disease death rates are currently increasing while other major causes of death are declining. The American Lung Association funds vital research on the causes of and treatments for lung disease. With the generous support of the public, the American Lung Association is *“Improving life, one breath at a time.”* For more information about the American Lung Association, a Charity Navigator *Four Star Charity*, or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or log on to [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org).

###