Despite a high interest in quitting, disparities in tobacco use and negative health outcomes exist among people with mental health conditions and substance use disorders (MH/SUDS)

This group has a higher prevalence of tobacco use and experiences higher rates of premature death caused by tobacco-related illnesses.

- Adults with mental health conditions are more likely to smoke. Adults with mental health conditions are twice as likely to smoke compared to other adults.\(^i\) Research has identified some reasons for this higher prevalence and the need to offer effective treatment.\(^ii\)
- People with MH/SUDs account for many tobacco-related deaths. Almost half of all deaths annually that are caused by smoking occur among people with MH/SUDs.\(^iii\)
- Quitting tobacco increases likelihood of recovery. People who quit tobacco during substance use treatment are 25% more likely to realize long-term recovery.\(^iv\)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Vermont Tobacco Control Program (VTCP), and partners have identified adults with MH/SUDs as a high priority group\(^v\)

- In Vermont, people with mental health conditions, people with depression, and people who use marijuana or binge drink have a significantly higher prevalence of cigarette smoking compared to the state average.\(^vi\)
- Because of this higher prevalence, the VTCP and the Substance Use Program within the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) have undertaken efforts to reduce the disparity in smoking prevalence among those with MH/SUDs.

Interventions can be implemented at the state, community, and facility levels

State and community interventions:
- Promoting tailored quit ads and Quitline programming
- Offering training and wellness supports to clinical and frontline staff
- Partnering with local facilities to encourage uptake of interventions.

Facility interventions\(^vii\):
- Implementing tobacco-free campus policies
- Increasing tobacco use and dependence screening
- Supporting tobacco cessation treatment assistance to clients
Data show information about mental health and substance use facilities in VT

Each year, SAMHSA collects data on mental health and substance use facilities across the nation using a survey tool. Basic questions are asked about the services these facilities provide, including some services and practices related to tobacco control.

The data presented below is from 2019 N-MHSS\textsuperscript{viii} (mental health) and N-SSATS\textsuperscript{ix} (substance use).

### Mental health facilities in VT
- 83 facilities
  - 31% community mental health center
  - 27% residential treatment centers for adults
  - 12% outpatient mental health facilities
- 58% treat patients with co-occurring MH and SUD

### Substance use facilities in VT
- 54 facilities
  - 88% offer any outpatient
  - 15% offer any residential
  - 6% offer any hospital inpatient
- 89% treat patients with co-occurring MH and SUD

### Tobacco-related efforts at these facilities
- 56% screen for tobacco use (56% nationally)
- 52% offer tobacco cessation counseling (43% nationally)
- 44% offer NRT (27% nationally)
- 31% offer non-nicotine cessation meds (26% nationally)

To promote wellness and reduce tobacco-related illness, this work is shared among many partners

- **Agency of Human Services - Department of Mental Health and Department of Health**: These departments work for the physical, emotional and mental health of all Vermonters. The emphasis is prevention, early intervention, substance use and mental health treatment and supports involving preferred providers, designated agencies and the Tobacco Quitline.

- **DMH Designated Agencies (DAs)**: A network of private nonprofit agencies that provide mental health care operating in each geographic region of the state.

- **Vermont Care Partners (VCP)**: An organization representing a network of sixteen agencies located throughout Vermont that provide a variety of community services and supports, including adult mental health and substance use disorder services.

- **Vermont Cooperative for Practice Improvement (VCPI)**: A statewide membership cooperative that provides relevant training and education to help agencies, programs, and staff.

### VTCP is currently granting partners to do this work

The VTCP is doing this work primarily by funding grants for organizations across Vermont.

- **Clara Martin Center**: Expand the capacity of the existing Wellness team to implement expanded wellness programming, including on-site tobacco cessation counseling. Refine data collection abilities at the designated agency.

- **VCP**: Monitor specific measures in the EHR to determine which DAs are doing more screening, assessing, referring, and treating of tobacco cessation.
Where this initiative is going

The Tobacco and Mental Health initiative continues to grow. Next steps include:

- Convening a workgroup of granted partners and others that will meet quarterly to discuss updates, progress, and shared goals.
- Communicating on the need to reduce tobacco-associated health inequities experienced by Vermonters with mental health and substance use disorders.
- Collecting and using data to monitor progress and share results.

For more information or to get involved, contact Dana Bourne Dana.Bourne@vermont.gov.

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2. Lubitz, et al. *History and Correlates of Smoking Cessation Behaviors Among Smokers With Serious Mental Illness*. Nicotine Tob Res. 2020


