

Advancing Equity Through Quitlines: A Formative Examination for the Quitline Community

Conversations for Improving Quitline Equity

The North American Quitline Consortium's (NAQC) mission is to expand the reach, quality, and effectiveness of quitlines to support commercial tobacco cessation. As part of this mission, NAQC promotes collaboration among stakeholders to identify and disseminate best practices. NAQC maintains a goal to reach 6% of commercial tobacco¹ users in priority [specific] populations.² To help achieve this goal, NAQC interviewed key informants and facilitated dialogue among state commercial tobacco quitline funders, CDC-funded national networks³, and quitline service providers to identify ways to strengthen quitline practices for reach and engagement with populations experiencing commercial tobacco-related disparities.⁴

The interviews included quitline awareness, best and promising practices, reach, equity in tobacco cessation, partnership and collaboration, and quitline sustainability. The discussion focused on understanding the implications of NAQC's six prioritized best and promising practices⁵ to identify and prioritize actions to decrease commercial tobacco-related disparities.⁶ Following individual conversations, NAQC identified key learnings and priority considerations to strengthen quitline practices to increase reach and engagement for specific populations. NAQC convened a stakeholder engagement session to present the findings and obtain feedback, identify gaps and opportunities, and discuss considerations for action to improve cessation equity.

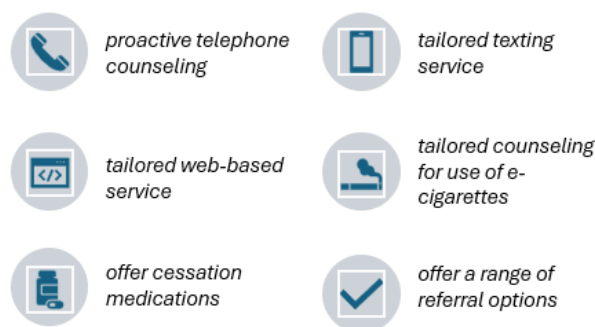


Figure 1. NAQC prioritized six best practices for quitline programs.

Learnings

The conversations with key informants identified three key themes:

1. Most quitlines are implementing the six best practices, however there are challenges in ensuring equitable access to services.
2. Achieving equity in commercial tobacco cessation requires tailored materials and services, effective promotional messaging, culturally responsive coaching staff, ease of access to services, and trusted partnerships.
3. Disaggregation of data is important to measure the reach and engagement of populations including subpopulations disproportionately impacted by commercial tobacco use.

¹ NAQC documents refer to "commercial tobacco" as harmful products that are made and sold by tobacco companies. It does not include "traditional tobacco" used by Indigenous groups for religious or ceremonial purposes.

² Improving the Quality of Quitline Services to Specific Populations - Listening Sessions to Assess Barriers Impacting Most on Reach and Quality: A Report of Findings (2011)

https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.naquitline.org/resource/resmgr/Issue_Papers/ReportImprovingtheQualityofQ.pdf

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. CDC's National Networks Driving Action. [CDC's National Networks Driving Action | Smoking and Tobacco Use | CDC](#). Accessed 23 August 2024.

⁴ This report is supported through Cooperative Agreement 5 NU58DP006704-05-00. The contents of this publication are under the editorial control of NAQC and do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC.

⁵ North American Quitline Consortium (2022). Report on Priority Practices for State Quitlines to Implement by June 2023 (K. Mason, Editor). Phoenix, AZ.

⁶ North American Quitline Consortium (2024). Report on Advancing Equity Through Quitlines. (P. Curtis, Editor). Phoenix, AZ. List of participating organizations 0924.pdf.

Priority Considerations

Several considerations arose from the discussions and stakeholder engagement session including the need to:

- Expand the use of tailored protocols such as culturally and linguistically adapted programs.
- Increase collaboration with nontraditional partners (e.g., community groups).
- Include more data on utilization rates across specific populations and subgroups.
- Support the disaggregation of data across populations.
- Ensure funding for services is sustained and expanded.
- Increase access to technology-mediated options.
- Include the end user perspectives in strategies for promotion, engagement, and treatment.
- Identify a pathway to measure success in treatment and promotional reach for specific populations.

Actions

Actionable strategies identified by stakeholders for enhancing equity include:

- **Reduce Barriers and Improve Access:** Address technological and financial barriers, ensure cultural responsiveness, and build trust within communities to improve promotion of services and service utilization.
- **Expand Tailored Programs:** Develop culturally and linguistically appropriate materials and services to better serve diverse populations.
- **Enhance Data Collection and Disaggregation:** Collect comprehensive data on utilization rates and disaggregate data by demographics to better tailor services.
- **Strengthen Partnerships:** Increase collaboration with nontraditional partners, such as community-based organizations, to expand outreach and engagement.
- **Secure Sustained Funding:** Advocate for sustained and increased funding to support promotion, capacity building, service delivery, and community-based commercial tobacco cessation efforts.
- **Expand Digital Technology Options for Quitlines:** Increase the use of text messaging and web-based services for cessation to increase access to services for populations experiencing commercial tobacco-related disparities.
- **Identify a Pathway or Blueprint for Success:** Identify a pathway for measuring success in treatment and promotional reach to specific populations for cessation efforts.

By prioritizing these strategies, the quitline community can strengthen quitline practices to increase reach, engagement, and cessation outcomes for populations experiencing tobacco-related disparities.

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