

International Quitline Institute

WCTOH IQI Workshop 2015: Protocol Roundtable - Medications

Protocol: Medication Decision Support

Please Note: This example assumes that the quitline is authorized to discuss cessation medications that are available in the country, state or province in which it operates. Workshop participants should recognize that government regulations on this vary and should check with their Ministry of Health or other authorizing entity. It also assumes that the quitline is authorized to provide information about, and decision support for, use of government-approved cessation medications and may refer the caller to their health care provider to further discuss their preferred medication.

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Definition:

Decision support is the process of helping quitline participants make an informed decision whether to use a cessation medication and which medication is most well suited to their needs. There are degrees of *decision support* from providing basic information, to helping the caller select a medication, screening for use precautions, and recommending a dosage.

Purpose:

Decision support helps the quitline participant recognize the types of medications that are government approved for tobacco cessation. It can serve to educate them on how the various medications work, how to use them effectively, and how they integrate with behavioral strategies by reducing nicotine withdrawal.

Procedure:

Counsellor should:

1. Educate the participant about the various cessation medications that are available in the country or province that the quitline serves.
2. Assess which medication the participant is interested in. Often callers will already know and tell the counsellor which medication they wish to use. For other callers, counsellors may need to list the available medications and provide some description of each.
3. Identify which, if any, medications are covered by the quitline or government health care system; experience shows that most quitline callers prefer medications that are free or covered by insurance, rather than paying for medications themselves.
4. Ask a series of screening questions to determine if there are any significant medical conditions that may suggest the need for a different medication type. An example may be a heart attack in the past two weeks for someone interested in the nicotine patch or gum. Prescription medications such as bupropion (Wellbutrin) or varenicline (Chantix) may be suitable alternatives that participants can discuss with their health care provider.
5. Provide information on the proper use of the selected medication(s), including dosage and how to use it correctly. It is a good idea to provide use instructions verbally and in writing.

6. Explain how they can access the medication to avoid any barriers or confusion about how to obtain their medication.
7. Explain when they are to start the medication in relation to their planned quit date. For example, NRT is started on the participant's quit date, while bupropion and varenicline are started one or two weeks before the planned quit date.
8. Document the information provided in the participant's file so it is available for future reference.
9. Inquire about medication use during future calls to assess for proper usage.