



While smoking rates among people with behavioral health conditions are at least double those of the general population, health professionals are often unsure how to best address tobacco use with this population. There is evidence that people with behavioral health conditions are more heavily addicted to tobacco, so brief approaches may not be as helpful as they are with other populations<sup>1</sup>.

The New York City Tobacco Cessation Treatment and Technical Assistance Center (**NYC TCTTAC**) is a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene initiative that establishes free training and technical assistance for providers of NYC behavioral health services. TCTTAC is a partnership with the Center for Practice Innovations (CPI) at Columbia Psychiatry and the New York State Psychiatric Institute, and with Jill Williams, MD from Rutgers University's Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. TCTTAC is designed to address certain barriers to treatment by ensuring that providers have the necessary training and organizational support to use skills and knowledge about treatment of tobacco use disorder in their daily work. Training behavioral health professionals has been shown to increase the provision of tobacco treatment<sup>2</sup>.

### **I. Archived webinars with free *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits*™**

Physicians, nurses and other prescribers who work in behavioral health are an essential part of a successful team for addressing tobacco use. TCTTAC has developed specialized free resources for these professionals. These webinars are located on the CPI website Learning Management System ([CPI Learning Community](#)). These newer webinars are in addition to the three FIT modules on Tobacco Dependence Treatment (Modules 36, 37, and 38), which also include a module on Introductory Pharmacology for Treating Tobacco (38).

**Webinar: [Pharmacology for Treating Tobacco- Advanced Topics and Updates](#)** (by Jill Williams, MD).  
As of 9/19/17, this course provides *1.5 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits*™ for physicians.

### **II. NYC TCTTAC website**

The Center's website ([www.nyctcttac.org](http://www.nyctcttac.org)) includes links to Reports & Articles, Tools, Fact Sheets and Webinars.

### **III. FDA Updates about the Use of Tobacco Treatment Medications**

In recent years, the FDA has changed the labeling for use of nicotine replacement medications (called NRT or nicotine replacement therapy). These include new statements explaining the removal of warnings about using two nicotine products simultaneously or using NRT with other nicotine-containing products, such as cigarettes, and the removal of previous guidance to limit the term of NRT use. In addition, the FDA removed the black box warning about varenicline (Chantix) causing neuropsychiatric side effects due to strong clinical trial data (links below).

**[Link about Nicotine Replacement Therapy](#)**  
**[FDA Modifications to Labeling Nicotine Replacement Therapy Products](#)**

**[Link about Varenicline \(Chantix\) and Bupropion](#)**  
**[FDA Revised Drug Safety Communication on Chantix and Zyban](#)**

### **IV. Access to Tobacco Treatment Medications with NY Medicaid**

Recently, New York State (NYS) Medicaid policy changes mandated that all 18 Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) in the State make it easier to prescribe cessation medications. NYS Medicaid removed annual limits for medications to treat tobacco use, and also removed the need for prior authorization (except for brand-name products when generics are available). These coverage changes make it easier to prescribe cessation medications for all Medicaid recipients, including those who are dual-eligible (both Medicare and Medicaid). This policy includes all seven US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved cessation medications, as well as combinations of long- and short-acting NRT medications. Double-click the image below to open a letter from senior leadership in the NYS Office of Mental Health and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene describing these expanded benefits.



1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vital Signs: Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults Aged ≥18 Years with Mental Illness — United States, 2009–2011. *MMWR* 2013;62:81–87.

2. Williams JM, Miskimen T, Minsky S, Cooperman NA, Miller M, Dooley-Budsock P, Cruz J and Steinberg ML. Increasing Tobacco Dependence Treatment Through Continuing Education Training for Behavioral Health Professionals. *Psychiatric Services* 2014; doi: 10.1176/appi.ps.201300523