



Every year, employers see

**\$167 Billion<sup>1\*</sup>**

go up in smoke

**“The human and financial costs associated with tobacco use are enormous.**

In addition to the incalculable physical and emotional distress brought on by tobacco related diseases and deaths, **tobacco use exacts a high price from employers** via greater costs for health care and life insurance, increased absenteeism and lower rates of presenteeism and productivity.”

—National Business Group on Health,  
Center for Prevention and Health Services<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Total cost smoking exerts on employers for health care and lost productivity.

## Smoking: the sobering statistics

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that

### Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States<sup>3</sup>

- About **1 in every 5** American adults smokes tobacco<sup>4</sup>
- Smoking claims approximately **440,000 lives** per year (nearly 1 in 5 deaths)<sup>5,6</sup>
- In addition to lung cancer, smoking causes cancers of the bladder, oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, kidney, pancreas, and stomach<sup>7</sup>
- Smokers are at least **twice as likely** as nonsmokers to suffer from heart attacks and stroke<sup>6</sup>



When it comes to the economic consequences of smoking  
**Employers bear the burden**

- An estimated \$167 billion is spent per year on smoking-related health care and loss of productivity due to premature death from smoking<sup>1</sup>
- Employers also pay the price for lost time due to smoking-related illnesses, smoking breaks, early retirement and disability from smoking hazards, and other smoking-related problems<sup>1</sup>

In a study of nearly 35,000 US employees<sup>1</sup>

### Smokers cost employers about \$1800 more per year than nonsmokers<sup>1</sup>

## Smoking cessation programs get results

The CDC has reported that 70% of current smokers express a desire to quit—and employer-sponsored smoking cessation programs have been shown to be effective in helping them achieve this goal.<sup>8</sup>

**“Paying for an employee’s tobacco cessation treatment provides more return on investment than any other adult treatment or prevention benefit.”**

—National Business Group on Health,  
Center for Prevention and Health Services<sup>2</sup>

### Implementing an effective smoking cessation program

According to the CDC, employers should use the following protocol for implementing a successful cessation program<sup>8</sup>:

- Coverage for at least 4 counseling sessions lasting a minimum of 30 minutes each
- Coverage of smoking cessation prescription and over-the-counter medication
- Coverage for at least 2 smoking cessation attempts per year
- Elimination or minimization of co-pay or deductible costs for counseling and medication

Other measures employers can take to assist in smoking cessation include<sup>9</sup>:

- Communicating to employees the types of cessation benefits that are available to them via their health plan
- Adopting a long-term approach to smoking cessation that supports multiple quit attempts
- Promoting a workplace that discourages smoking and encourages a healthy lifestyle (eg, incentives to achieve and maintain optimal health)

**Promoting a workplace that discourages smoking and encourages a healthy lifestyle can assist in smoking cessation.**



### Impact of cigarette smoking on productivity<sup>1</sup>

	Nonsmokers	Former Smokers	Current Smokers
Mean total hours lost per year (absenteeism + presenteeism*)	78	95.2	130.1
Estimated cost of health-related productivity loss per year	\$2623	\$3246	\$4430

Adapted from Bunn et al, 2006. \*Presenteeism represents unproductive time at work.

## Employer-sponsored smoking cessation programs can save companies money

- Smoking cessation benefits are **more cost-effective** than many commonly covered preventive treatments, including those for hypertension and high cholesterol<sup>10</sup>
- Benefits for smoking cessation cost employers between \$1.20 and \$4.80 per employee annually, while employees who smoke can cost nearly **one thousand** times more<sup>1,8</sup>
- Smoking cessation programs can result in **reduced health care** and life insurance costs, **increased employee productivity**, less absenteeism, and reduced smoking-related neonatal health care costs<sup>8</sup>

“Because of the potential impact of smoking on overall health, the cost benefit of smoking cessation can be profound.... Supporting employees in quitting smoking is an investment that can contribute to increased productivity.”

—Jackson et al, *J Occup Environ Med*<sup>11</sup>

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