

Stakeholder Feedback Regarding a Statewide Protocol for Pharmacists To Prescribe Tobacco Cessation Products in Kansas

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Introduction

- In Kansas, 15.6% of adults smoked cigarettes in 2021, which is greater than the national average of 12.5%.
- Pharmacists in Kansas are limited to providing recommendations and counseling on the use of the over-the counter nicotine replacement therapy.
- Pharmacists have demonstrated their ability effectively prescribe and provide tobacco cessation interventions, attaining quit rates similar to other providers in states that allow pharmacists to prescribe tobacco cessation therapy.
- It is unknown if legislation introducing a statewide policy for pharmacists to prescribe all FDA-approved tobacco cessation medications would be supported in Kansas.
- The purpose of this study was to introduce model language for a statewide policy to tobacco control stakeholders in Kansas to gauge their support for such a policy and to collect feedback about proposed language.

Methods

- Eligible participants were representatives of tobacco control stakeholder organizations in Kansas. Potential tobacco control stakeholders were identified by the research team, with the assistance of the Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition, and snowball sampling was used to identify other potential stakeholders.
- A novel survey was designed to gather feedback from participants about the language contained in a statewide policy for pharmacists to prescribe all FDA-approved tobacco cessation medications.
- Verbiage from the existing Indiana Statewide protocol for Dispensing Tobacco Cessation Products by Pharmacists (Quit Now Indiana, 2023) was adapted for Kansas. Response options included “support language as is,” “support language with modifications,” and “reject language with rationale.”
- The survey concluded with two open-ended questions: (1) if there was additional information needed to support the protocol, and (2) if there were any comments regarding the pharmacist’s role in tobacco control initiatives in Kansas.
- The survey was delivered by email and remained open for three weeks between January and February 2023. Data were collected using a web-based survey, administered using Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap).
- Data were analyzed to identify which sections of the model language received the most feedback and recommendations for change.

Results

- Forty-four organizations were identified as potential tobacco control stakeholders in Kansas and invited to participate.
- Fifteen surveys were completed, for a response rate of 34%.
- Ten community pharmacies representing different Kansas regions were asked to complete the survey, and 36% of respondents (n=5) represented community pharmacies for a community pharmacy response rate of 50%.
- Additional respondents included stakeholder organizations such as: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas, Kansas Department of Aging, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas Medical Society, Kansas Pharmacists Association, Kansas Public Health Association, Masonic Cancer Alliance, National Alliance on Mental Health, and University of Kansas Health System for tobacco cessation.

Aggregate Responses by Section

Section	Description	Approve As Is	Approve with Modifications	Reject with Rationale
1	Introduction	73% (11)	20% (3)	7% (1)
2	Purpose	87% (13)	13% (2)	0% (0)
3	Qualifications	80% (12)	20% (3)	0% (0)
4	Products Covered	73% (11)	27% (4)	0% (0)
5	Procedure	93% (14)	7% (1)	0% (0)
6	Assessment	86% (13)	7% (1)	7% (1)
7	Health Screening	73% (11)	13% (2)	13% (2)
8	Referral	53% (8)	47% (7)	0% (0)
9	Dispensing	93% (14)	7% (1)	0% (0)
10	Counseling	100% (15)	0% (0)	0% (0)
11	Follow-up	80% (12)	7% (1)	13% (2)
12	Notification	80% (12)	13% (2)	7% (1)
13	Documentation	93% (14)	0% (0)	7% (1)
14	Protocol Review and Revision	87% (13)	13% (2)	0% (0)

- Seven participants (47%) provided feedback when asked if additional information was needed to support this protocol in Kansas.
- Forty percent (n=6) of participants provided feedback about the role of pharmacists in tobacco control initiatives in Kansas.

Discussion

- Findings from this study suggest most tobacco control stakeholders in Kansas are generally supportive of a statewide protocol that broadens pharmacists’ scope of practice, to include prescribing tobacco cessation products.
- Feedback from stakeholders was generally supportive with some minor modifications recommended. Sections of the model language to be reviewed for adjustments include the ability for pharmacists to prescribe to users of smokeless tobacco, ability to prescribe a combination of tobacco cessation products, incorporating a clause for newly FDA-approved cessation medications, simplifying the required health screening, and referral of high-risk patients.
- Future research describing the process for implementation and associated outcomes from states that have passed similar legislation would be beneficial to advance efforts in Kansas. Interviewing residents of Kansas, in addition to pharmacists and physicians participating in states allowing pharmacists to prescribe these products, could also support pharmacist tobacco control initiatives in the state.

Limitations

- Feedback from policymakers likely to be influential in the legislation process was requested but not obtained.
- All tobacco stakeholders likely to have a voice in legislation (e.g. pharmaceutical and tobacco industries) were not given an opportunity to participate.

Conclusions

- Model language for a statewide policy for pharmacists to prescribe tobacco cessation products in Kansas was generally supported by most tobacco control stakeholders surveyed.
- After consideration of each suggestion, a proposed Standing Order for the State of Kansas will be drafted, based on the collective feedback from participating tobacco control stakeholders.

