



ALCOHOL, DRUG & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES  
DON KINGDON, PH.D, INTERIM DIRECTOR

2000 Embarcadero Cove, Suite 400  
Oakland, California 94606  
(510) 567-8100 / TTY (510) 533-5018

June 6, 2017

Dear Providers:

Most of us would agree with the national health experts, including SAMHSA, the CDC, NAMI, NASMHPD (National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors), and many others, that quitting tobacco is one of the most important actions someone can take to improve their health and wellness. This is particularly true of clients with serious mental illnesses and/or addictions, who nationwide consume 45% of the cigarettes sold in the US, and statistically die 25 years earlier than the general population. At least 40% of these deaths are tobacco-related and in many cases are preventable. When consumers quit smoking they often gain additional benefits to their mental wellness, such as increased self-esteem, less stigma, better relations with family, less discrimination in housing and work opportunities, and easier social integration. These benefits lead to an improved quality of life in a broad range of areas.

For these reasons, and for ensuring high quality of care, BHCS will be prioritizing and monitoring compliance with our 2016 Provider Tobacco Policies and Consumer Treatment Protocols in accordance with Exhibit A-1 Tobacco Control, Education and Prevention Guidelines Provisions of provider contracts, (# 7 in Mental Health, #8 in SUD contracts). Over the next couple of years this will include the expectation that providers step up efforts to include implementing tobacco-free facilities and grounds at provider sites (including BHCS supported housing and board and care sites), increasing efforts to provide tobacco treatment, and establishing more comprehensive tobacco-free programs. We are encouraging all programs to increase efforts to screen for tobacco use on admission, advise clients to quit smoking, and provide interventions that support clients to try to quit smoking while in treatment. These efforts are consistent with evidence-based treatment and will give a clear message that the BHCS system of care recognizes tobacco use as an addiction like all others; that quitting tobacco can make quitting other substances more successful; and treatment of tobacco is part of our high quality mental health and substance use treatment. All of these actions will support clients to quit smoking and will reduce the harmful effects of secondhand smoke exposure in living environments. We applaud those programs that have already shown exemplary leadership in these areas, and are extending a reminder to all programs that addressing tobacco use is an important part of our mission "to maximize recovery, resilience and wellness."

To support you in implementing these important life-saving policies, BHCS will be having a Tobacco Policy Implementation Conference for Executive Directors on Sep. 14, 2017. It's



essential that Executive Directors mark your calendars and attend this special conference to prepare you to fully implement Tobacco Policies by 2018. Members of your Boards of Directors are also welcomed and encouraged to attend.

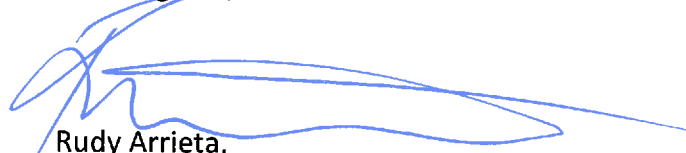
## Resources

**ATOD Network for Tobacco Cessation** - I'm sure you are aware of the training and technical assistance services provided by our contractors, the ATOD Network staff, Dr. Cathy McDonald and Patricia Sanchez. We encourage you to attend their trainings here at BHCS, and to contact them to assist your efforts to implement tobacco policies and provide tobacco treatment. Please contact Patricia Sanchez at [SanchP@sutterhealth.org](mailto:SanchP@sutterhealth.org) to set up on-site training for staff and/or technical assistance support.

**PEERS** - BHCS funds the PEERS Tobacco Program that offers peer-led presentations that support and encourage consumers to consider quitting smoking as part of their mental health recovery. You can schedule a peer-led Tobacco Harm Reduction presentation at your site by contacting Heather Reimer at 510-832-7337 ext. 205, or email: [hriemer@peersnet.org](mailto:hriemer@peersnet.org)

**BHCS website ([www.acbhcs.org](http://www.acbhcs.org)) Tobacco Tab on the Home page** - Here you will find a menu of resources, including the 2016 BHCS Provider Tobacco Policies and Consumer Treatment Protocols, a long list of tobacco education materials, related research articles, toolkits, videos and newsletters.

Best Regards,



Rudy Arrieta,  
Quality Management Director, ACBHCS