April 21, 2015

John D. Stobo, M.D.
Executive Vice President
University of California Health
University of California
Office of the President
1111 Franklin Street, 11th Floor
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear Dr. Stobo:

CALIFORNIA SMOKERS' HELPLINE MEANINGFUL USE STAGE 2 SPECIALIZED REGISTRY

This letter is to affirm that the California Smokers' Helpline (Helpline) for tobacco cessation treatment is declaring readiness for Meaningful Use Stage 2 (MU2) consistent with guidance provided by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for the MU2 of health information technology with respect to reporting to specialized registries.

The Helpline provides evidence-based telephone counseling as recommended by the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Clinical Practice Guideline, Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update. It also accepts referrals of tobacco users from health care providers across the state. With certain health systems it has established a fully electronic, bidirectional referral mechanism, through which providers can refer patients to the Helpline from within the Electronic Health Record (EHR) and receive automated, individualized feedback reports.

Specific cases reported to the Helpline are followed up individually for treatment and also become part of a statewide database of over 700,000 patients identified as tobacco users in California. The database is frequently used for public health research and comparative study on tobacco use and cessation in California.

According to the CMS guidance document, Meaningful Use Stage 2 Public Health Agency Readiness: Specialized Registries, "reporting to registries is an integral part of improving population and public health." The Helpline is specifically designed to
improve population and public health by reducing the percentage of Californians who use tobacco.

The CMS document notes that MU2 regulations are purposefully general in describing specialized registries to provide “flexibility and avoid excluding registries.” The only registries specifically excluded as “specialized registries” are those dealing with the reporting of cancer cases, which by definition are considered “cancer registries.” CMS guidance document further states that “specialized registries may be sponsored or maintained by Public Health Agencies (PHAs) or other organizations (e.g., national specialty societies, patient safety organizations, quality improvement organizations).” The Helpline is principally funded by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), a PHA, and is an active member of the North American Quitline Consortium, a national specialty society that is working with member quitlines to establish a technical standard for e-referrals.

In accordance with the above mentioned definitions, the California Department of Public Health determined that the Helpline qualifies as a specialized registry for purposes of meeting MU2 criteria. In the near future, CDPH anticipates making changes to the CDPH/Health Information Exchange website to communicate this information to other health care providers and health care systems.

If you need further information regarding this matter, please contact Dr. James Greene, M.D., M.S., Deputy Director, Center for Health Statistics and Informatics at James.Greene@cdph.ca.gov or (916) 440-7849 or April Roeseler, M.S.P.H., Chief, Tobacco Control Branch at April.Roeseler@cdph.ca.gov or (916) 449-5504.

Additionally, technical assistance related to MU is available from Scott Fujimoto, M.D., Public Health Medical Officer, Center for Health Statistics and Informatics at Scott.Fujimoto@cdph.ca.gov or (916) 324-6376 and Van Vu, Data Processing Manager II, Information Technology Services Division at Van.Vu@cdph.ca.gov or (916) 323-1644.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Smith, MD, MPH
Director and State Health Officer

cc: See Next Page
cc: Ms. Karyn DiGiorgio  
Executive Director  
UC Center for Health Quality & Innovation  
University of California  
Office of the President  
1111 Franklin Street, 11th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94607

Mr. Daniel Phillips  
Meaningful Use Project Manager  
University of California, Irvine  
200 S. Manchester Avenue, Suite 508  
Orange, CA 92868

Elisa Tong, M.D., M.A.  
Assistant Professor  
Internal Medicine  
UC Davis  
Lawrence J. Ellison Ambulatory Care Center  
Alzheimer’s Care Services  
4860 Y Street, Suite 0100  
Sacramento, CA 95817

Shu-Hong Zhu, PhD, Professor  
Family and Preventive Medicine  
University of California, San Diego  
Rebecca and John Moores UCSD Cancer Center  
9500 Gilman Drive, Department 0905  
La Jolla, CA 92030-0905
Internal cc:

James Greene, M.D., M.S.
Deputy Director
Center for Health Statistics and Informatics
California Department of Public Health
MS 5102
P.O. Box 997410, Suite 71.1103
Sacramento, CA 95899-7410

April Roeseler, M.S.P.H., Chief
Tobacco Control Branch
California Department of Public Health
MS 7206
P.O. Box 997377, Suite 74.516
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377