



KAREN L. SMITH, MD, MPH  
Director and State Health Officer

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency  
California Department of Public Health



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.  
Governor

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 using patients 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

John D. Stobo, M.D.  
Page 2  
April 21, 2015

improve population and public health by reducing the percentage of Californians who use tobacco.

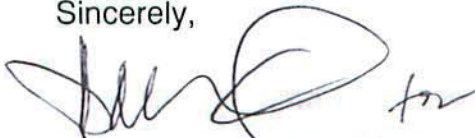
The CMS document notes that MU2 regulations are purposefully general in describing specialized registries to provide "flexibility and avoid excluding registries." The only registries specifically excluded as "specialized registries" are those dealing with the reporting of cancer cases, which by definition 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 improvements 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:Van.Vu@cdph.ca.gov) or (916) 323-1644.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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

cc: See Next Page



John D. Stobo, M.D.  
Page 3  
April 21, 2015

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John D. Stobo, M.D.  
Page 4  
April 21, 2015

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