Public Health Policy in Support of Insurance Coverage for Smoking Cessation Treatments

Politique de santé publique en faveur de la couverture d’assurance pour les traitements visant à mettre fin au tabagisme

ROBERT SCHWARTZ, FARZANA HAJI, ALEXEY BABAYAN, CHRISTOPHER LONGO AND ROBERTA FERRENCE

Appendix 1. Interview Guides

Interview guide for employers
1. What is your role within the company?
   – How many years of experience do you have?
2. How many employees do you have?
3. How many smokers would you estimate work at your company?
4. Describe the human resources function at your company (i.e., size, location in company, internal vs. the placement agency, etc.).
5. Describe your benefits selection process:
   – Participants in process (internal and external)
   – Decision cycle (length, frequency, etc.)
   – Factors considered when selecting benefits
6. Rank the following factors as most to least likely to influence your decision-making about purchasing a specific benefit:
   – Employee demand
   – Cost of benefit (i.e., what price point is too high?)
   – Cost of related condition to company (i.e., medical costs, absenteeism, other)
   – Prevalence of certain condition in company (i.e., what rate would make you decide to purchase?)
   – Visibility in media
   – Company goodwill
   – Advice from insurance brokers, actuarial consultants
   – Scientific evidence supporting the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a service
   – Credibility of an insurance agency
   – Other
7. Are all employees at your company offered benefits?
8. What benefits are offered (medical, dental, vision, etc.)?
9. Does your company currently offer any preventive health programs:
   - Benefits? If yes, please describe.
   - Incentive programs? If yes, please describe.
   - Worksite wellness? If yes, please describe.
10. If your company provided any of the programs listed in Question 9, but subsequently chose to eliminate them, please describe factors leading to this decision.
11. How do you define a smoking cessation benefit?
12. Do you currently offer a smoking cessation benefit to your employees? If yes, which ones?
13. Are you satisfied with your current smoking cessation benefits? Are you planning to expand a range of cessation benefits in the future?
   - If not, have you ever offered a smoking cessation benefit to employees? Are you planning to offer this benefit in the nearest future?
   - If not, what factors prevent you from offering the benefit?
14. What is the best method of disseminating benefit information at your company?
   - From your company to a health insurance agency?
   - From a health insurance agency to your company?
   - From your company to employees?
   - From external organizations, such as advocacy/policy groups, to your company?
15. If you want to advocate for smoking cessation benefits with insurance companies, what types of support or resources do you need?
16. Is there anything that the government should do to promote insurance coverage for smoking cessation services?

Interview guide for insurers
1. What is your role within the company?
2. How long has your company been providing preventive health services?
3. Do you have a list of service providers (physicians, pharmacists) you work with?
4. What industries do the employers/companies you work with generally work in?
5. Please describe the process of negotiating a contract between your company and an employer on health benefit plans:
   - Participants in process (internal and external)
   - Decision cycle (length, frequencies, etc.)
   - Factors considered when preparing health plan options
6. Rank the following factors as most to least likely to influence your decision-making about offering a specific benefit to employers:
   - Cost of benefit (i.e., what price point is too high?)
   - Demands of employers
   - Quality of services
   - Scientific evidence supporting the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a service
   - Estimated level of service uptake
   - Ability to monitor utilization, experiences of services
   - Other

7. What type of benefits do you typically offer to companies (medical, dental, vision, etc.)?

8. Does your company currently offer coverage for any preventive health services? If yes, which ones?

9. If your company provided any of the programs listed in previous question, but subsequently chose to eliminate them, please describe factors leading to this decision.

10. How do you define a smoking cessation benefit?

11. Do you currently offer a smoking cessation benefit to companies? If yes, which ones?

12. Are you planning to expand a range of cessation benefits in the future?
   - If not, have you ever offered a smoking cessation benefit to employers? Are you planning to offer this benefit in the nearest future?
   - If not, what factors prevent you from offering this benefit to employers?

13. Is there anything that government should do to promote insurance coverage for smoking cessation services?

**Interview guide for government representatives**

1. Describe your role within the organization. What are your main responsibilities?

2. How does your organization regulate the health insurance sector in Ontario? What are your organization’s main functions in this regard?

3. What are your (your organization’s) relationships with other government agencies that are in charge of regulating the health insurance sector in Ontario?

4. To what extent do your organization’s regulatory activities affect types and amount of preventive health services offered by insurance companies?

5. Currently there is a limited availability of smoking cessation benefits under private health insurance plans. Do you think the government should encourage employers and insurers to include smoking cessation services in health plans?

6. What measures by the government, do you think, would encourage insurance coverage for smoking cessation services?
   - Imposing a legislation that would require insurance companies to cover cessation services
   - Providing tax incentives to employers offering smoking cessation services to their employees
   - Other

7. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions you would like to share?