

January 18, 2022

Braden Ainsworth
Program Manager
Tobacco Prevention and Control Program
Utah Department of Health

Dear Mr. Ainsworth:

This letter is in reference to our recent conversation about the impact of requiring parental consent for Utah youth under age 18 to engage in coaching to quit nicotine in the My Life, My Quit™ program.

National Jewish Health, the leading respiratory hospital in the nation, developed My Life, My Quit™ to address the unique needs of young people seeking assistance with becoming nicotine-free. We developed the program based on focus groups with teens, who identified three major components they wanted in a program to stop using tobacco products:

1. The program needed to address vaping because e-cigarettes are the most popular tobacco product used by youth. Our program is tailored to both e-cigarettes and other tobacco products.
2. The program needed to be clearly tailored to youth, rather than adults, and to reflect youth experiences. Youth have access to a dedicated toll-free number, youth-oriented website, and live texting with a Coach for support.
3. The program needed to be confidential to build trust with youth as they quit using nicotine. As a hospital, we follow applicable state and federal laws related to confidentiality of health information.

The My Life, My Quit™ program is available to help youth quit nicotine at no cost to the individual. All of our Coaches are trained Tobacco Treatment Specialists, who understand the dangers of nicotine addiction and know how to help young people quit. Since launching the program in July 2019, at the height of the youth vaping and E-cigarette and Vaping-associated Acute Lung Injury (EVALI) epidemics, we have enrolled more than 3000 youth from 21 states seeking help with quitting nicotine. Our evaluation data highlight very high rates of success, with two-thirds of survey respondents reporting they had not used any nicotine for the past 30 days at seven-months after enrollment.

In the My Life, My Quit™ program nationally, 48% of youth report their parent or guardian is not aware that they are enrolling in a program to help them stop using nicotine. In Utah, distinct from the other 20 states in which we offer My Life, My Quit™ services, we require parental consent for youth to engage in coaching. Approximately 25% of Utah youth who reach out because they wish to stop using nicotine-containing products are unable or unwilling to ask for parent/guardian consent. Extrapolating these data, we estimate that only half of Utah youth, who are ready to quit and live a healthier life, are willing to ask their parent/guardian for help with quitting, if their parent/guardian was not aware of their nicotine use. As a result, we miss an opportunity to help hundreds of youth end their addiction to nicotine when they reach out for support.

The harms of youth using nicotine are well established in scientific and medical literature, as well as reported by the Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service. The negative effects of nicotine use for youth include problems with memory, concentration, attention, and impulse control. Because the adolescent brain is undergoing rapid developmental changes, nicotine use during this period can have lasting impacts on the long-term health of youth, including a higher likelihood of substance use and mood disorders in adulthood. It is vital that youth stop using nicotine to ensure a healthy future.

We understand the importance of a young person involving their family and supportive others in a decision to become healthier. In fact, a major component of our program includes helping youth identify who they can rely upon to support their quit journey. We provide coaching to young people on how to have conversations with adults to garner support, and offer to practice with them. Our goal is not to supplant the importance of parental/guardian support, but to respect the individual journey each youth participant chooses in becoming tobacco free.

Please contact me should you require additional information.

Best regards,



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