

Quick-Hitting Survey Hiring Practices For Smokers

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Executive Summary

Methodology

In November 2018, The Health Management Academy conducted a quick-hitting survey of Leading Health Systems to assess hiring practices for smokers. The 19 responding Chief Human Resource Officers (CHROs) represent health systems with an average Net Patient Revenue of \$4.5 billion that own or operate 239 hospitals with 52,000 beds and approximately 2.5 million admissions per annum.

Key Findings

- Thirty-seven percent of health systems have a formal policy in place for screening tobacco users as part of their hiring practice.
- Of the systems that have a policy to screen for tobacco users, 85% eliminate smokers from the hiring process at some or all of their locations.
- Most health systems (60%) require applicants to wait one year before reapplying if they are found to be a smoker during the hiring process.

Results

Thirty-seven percent of health systems have some formal policy in place to screen potential hires for smoking (Figure 1). Some systems shared that they use a blood test or urinalysis for nicotine or cotinine to verify this step of the process.

Of the systems that utilize a formal policy to screen for smoking, 71% eliminate tobacco users from consideration. Of the remaining respondents, 14% only eliminate smokers in the locations where state law allows and 14% do not eliminate tobacco users from consideration for the job (Figure 2).

The systems that do not eliminate smokers from the process and some of the systems that do not have a formal hiring policy for smokers report withholding the monthly health insurance contribution or charging a smoker's surcharge on the health insurance plan for employees who smoke. Additionally, health systems report that all campuses are tobacco/smoke free, and employees are not permitted to smoke during shifts.

"We do ask that caregivers who participate in our benefits plan complete a tobacco use attestation during open enrollment each year. Caregivers who smoke are charged a tobacco use surcharge if they are not enrolled in a tobacco cessation program or actively working with a healthcare provider to become tobacco free." (CHRO)

All responding health systems that eliminate smokers from consideration have a waiting period for applicants to reapply for a position (Figure 3). The majority (60%) of systems that eliminate smokers have a one year waiting period, 20% have a 3 month waiting period with an included tobacco cessation course, and 20% require only the completion of a tobacco cessation course. None of the systems with a waiting period have changed the length of that waiting period since instituting the practice.

"Our program uses a urinalysis to test for cotinine. If an individual tests positive, we will not hire them. We will give a referral to utilize our tobacco cessation program and we will pay for a round of tobacco cessation products from our outpatient pharmacy. We allow them to apply again after 3 months." (CHRO)

FIGURE 1. DOES YOUR HEALTH SYSTEM HAVE A FORMAL POLICY IN PLACE FOR SCREENING POTENTIAL HIRES FOR TOBACCO USE?

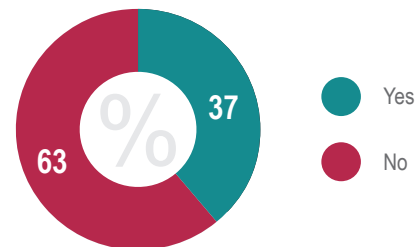


FIGURE 2. DO YOU ELIMINATE TOBACCO USERS FROM BEING CONSIDERED?

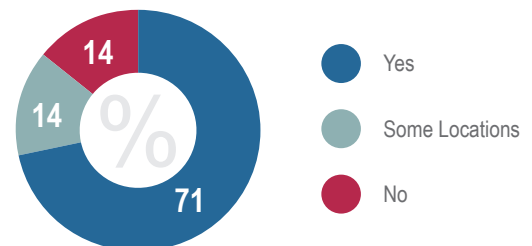


FIGURE 3. WHAT IS THE WAITING PERIOD FOR THEM TO REAPPLY AND BE RECONSIDERED?

