

Freedom from Tobacco & Freedom to Choose*

In accordance with the values and tenets of the mental health consumer/survivor movement, it is the right of all persons to achieve optimal health, wellness, and to make choices including freedom from addictive substances.

The decision to quit smoking is a personal one which should be respected by peers, treatment providers, and health care practitioners. The person should be treated with respect and dignity when or if smoking cessation tools are desired. Coercive measures to encourage or mandate smoking cessation is counter to choice.

Research shows that tobacco is an addictive substance; therefore, we support patients who are involuntarily held within Oregon treatment facilities or residential programs to make the decision to become tobacco-free.

We encourage health care practitioners to support residents in all levels of publicly-financed treatment facilities to achieve tobacco freedom, and to provide affordable and accessible smoking cessation tools to peers who choose to quit.

For tobacco freedom to become a reality for those who choose it, supports must be furnished including but not limited to: tobacco replacement therapy; clinical treatment determined in partnership with a peer; peer support; addiction support groups that are tobacco free; easy access to quit lines and other telephone peer support such as warmlines; and, a complaint process to support peers to reach individual goals.

We, who are mental health service recipients and others of us who are former patients, are determined to reverse the tide of disease and early death among our peers.

We are concerned with national statistics which clearly indicate that persons with mental illness are about twice as likely to smoke as other persons but have substantial quit rates.¹

It is the potential of all persons to recover and achieve wellness.

* This document was officially accepted through consensus by the Oregon Consumer/Survivor Council as a position statement of the Council.

¹ Karen Lasser; J. Wesley Boyd; Steffie Woolhandler; David U. Himmelstein; Danny McCormick; David H. Bor **Smoking and Mental Illness: A Population-Based Prevalence Study** *JAMA*. 2000;284(20):2606-2610.