

# UW-CTRI News Release

University of Wisconsin Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention

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## **New BadgerCare Plus Program Helps Smokers to Quit** *Existing Medicaid Coverage Also Now Covers Stop-Smoking Gum*

Record numbers of Wisconsin smokers are already working toward being tobacco free and now the state's newly launched BadgerCare Plus program, along with Medicaid and SeniorCare, covers the cost of FDA-approved stop-smoking medicine, with co-pays for enrollees. This is good news for the 70 percent of smokers who want to quit. Scientific evidence shows that combining medications with some form of coaching quadruples the chances of successfully quitting.

"We're pleased that the new BadgerCare Plus program offers smokers the necessary tools to help them break their dependence on a deadly product, tobacco," said Lezli Redmond, director for education and outreach programs at the University of Wisconsin Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention (UW-CTRI). "Those enrolled in Medicaid and SeniorCare also can get this jump start to a healthier life."

Under changes made earlier this month, for the first time, those in the Medicaid program have coverage for stop-smoking gum, which BadgerCare Plus also covers.

All three program cover the cost of:

- inhalers
- patches
- nasal sprays
- varenicline, known as Chantix
- bupropion, known as Zyban or Wellbutrin

"The smoking rate among adult Wisconsin Medicaid members is higher than among the general population. This medication is going to those who need it most, and it saves millions in Wisconsin's Medicaid costs," Redmond said.

Annual tobacco-related health-care costs top \$2.2 billion, costing Medicaid \$480 million.

UW-CTRI recently received a \$150,000 grant from the Indianapolis-based Wellpoint Foundation to reach out about expanded coverage for stop-smoking medication.

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