** Hospital Gold Star Standards of Excellence Program**

**Guidance Document**

To best support hospitals to participate in the Gold Star Standards of Excellence program, this guidance document provides examples of best practice answers to assist with completing the application. Each of the standards is followed by a sample answer from previous years’ applications. These sample answers provide one example of how the standards can be successfully met and are not the only strategy to meet each standard.

If you have additional questions or need clarification please don’t hesitate to contact us at BreatheEasy@mainehealth.org

**Tobacco-Free Policy  
Standard 1:** The hospital has a 100% tobacco-free campus policy that prohibits the smoking and use of all tobacco products including cigarettes, electronic smoking devices, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew, snus, cigars, pipes and non-FDA approved electronic nicotine delivery systems. Smoking and tobacco use by employees, patients, visitors and contractors is prohibited at all times on the hospital campus, including in parking lots, in vehicles parked on campus, at all satellite sites and at other properties the hospital owns and/or rents.

**Requirement:** **Attach** the written policy for the hospital. **\*Platinum**

Must include a definition of “smoking”.

Must provide examples of prohibited products, including electronic smoking devices and/or

other vapor products.

Includes prohibition of smoking and tobacco use in vehicles, parking lots and in personal

vehicles parked on hospital grounds

Includes a prohibition of smoking and tobacco use at all locations where hospital employees

work. The policy extends to all off-site meetings, conferences and in all hospital vehicles.

**Sample Answer\***

*As an organization dedicated to delivering high quality healthcare, and consistent with our mission of caring for our community, Maine Medical Center (MMC) is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all patients, visitors, staff, and the surrounding community. Tobacco use, smoking of any type of product, and environmental smoke all pose serious health and safety risks that undermine this goal.*

*Smoking of any product and the use of any tobacco product is prohibited on all grounds at MMC, including within 50 feet from entryways, windows, vents, and doorways, or in any location that allows smoke to circulate back into the building. It is also prohibited at off‐site meetings or conferences, in parking garages, parking lots, and in all MMC‐owned vehicles, as well as personal vehicles while on hospital property. Our policy was updated this past year to include all tobacco and smoking products including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, little cigars, cigarillos, bidis, kreteks, all smokeless and dissolvable tobacco products , including, but not limited to, dip, spit/spitless, chew snuff, snus and nasal tobacco, and any product intended to mimic tobacco, containing tobacco flavoring or delivering nicotine, including but not limited to, electronic nicotine delivery systems, e‐cigarettes, e‐cigars, e‐hookahs, vape pen, or any other plant product intended for inhalation, including marijuana, whether natural or synthetic, in any manner or in any form.*

*This policy continues to apply to everyone, including patients, visitors, employees, volunteers, contracted workers, vendors, students, and other guests and medical staff. It continues to address being sensitive to tobacco usage in the neighborhood. We have signs describing the policy that are clearly posted at all campus entrances, around parking lots and garages, and in areas where smokers have historically been known to gather. They are also posted on electronic signage through the campuses. Please see: Attachment A: Smoking and Tobacco‐Free Policy**\*Meets Platinum Standards 1A-1D*

**Thirdhand Smoke Policy  
Standard 2:** The hospital has a policy and clearly defined procedures to reduce patient and employee exposure to thirdhand tobacco smoke. Procedures and materials are available for patient and visitor education regarding thirdhand smoke.

**Requirement:** Attach the written policy for the hospital. Indicate how it is communicated to employees, patients, visitors and contractors. For example, tobacco smoke odor is included in the hospital’s scent-free policy and/or language in the tobacco policy which prohibits employees from reporting to work with notable thirdhand smoke odor.

**Notes:** Sample Answer: Secondhand and thirdhand smoke is addressed in MaineGeneral’s HR policies. HR06- General Conditions of Employment: “In consideration of our patients, families, guests, volunteers and employees, the use of strongly scented and fragrant products is prohibited. Exposure to strong scents and fragrances can cause discomfort for some individuals. Additionally, employees/ volunteers who smoke must keep patient and coworkers sensitivity in mind and ensure not to expose others to the odor of second hand smoke.” Employees, volunteers, students and members of the medical staff are informed of our tobacco-free and secondhand and thirdhand smoke policies by appropriate written material, administrative policy, the interview process, orientation and signage. See attached policy- Section IIJ and Section IVA.

**Policy Communication and Enforcement**

**Standard 3:** Written policies and procedures exist that detail the hospital’s policy (whether it is 100% tobacco-free or not) including a plan for enforcement and employee expectations. The tobacco-free policy defines staff members or departments that are responsible for enforcing the policy; including non-compliance.

**Requirement:** Include a copy of any policies/procedures that document meeting this standard with your application. At least five of the following strategies must be met in order to achieve this standard.

All staff are required to acknowledge in writing, on an annual basis, that they have

read/understand the tobacco-free policy.

New staff orientations include education about the hospital’s tobacco-free policy.

Progressive discipline for employee violations is written into the policy and made clear to all

employees.

Information about the tobacco-free policy is readily available on the hospital website and/or

through the HR department.

Employee training on how to handle policy violations with other employees, patients, and

visitors is provided for all staff.

Patients receive information on the hospital’s tobacco-free policy on admission and again

during their hospitalization as necessary.

Leadership walkabouts on the grounds are conducted during different times and days to

approach staff, visitors, and contractors using tobacco to offer education and request

compliance with the policy.

Staff involvement in regular cleanup efforts to reduce tobacco-related waste on the hospital

campus.

Policy signage can be found throughout the grounds including at all entrances to the campus

and buildings, in parking lots, near picnic tables and other outside seating areas, other areas

where people tend to gather, etc.

Other (please explain): Click or tap here to enter text.

The above checked items detail the areas of emphasis in our efforts to support a Smoking and Tobacco-Free campus. The Smoking and Tobacco Free Policy clearly outlines the scope and breadth of the smoking and tobacco free campus initiative, the values of MMC, expectations for employees, enforcement procedures, corrective action, and employee/patient education and resources. As above, all policies are available electronically on the MMC website.

On the MMC Tobacco Treatment Department intranet site, there is a Tool Kit that is available to help staff adhere to the policy. This includes tips for supporting the policy, a clinical protocol regarding working with patients with Tobacco Use Disorder, and a tool kit to support leaders in helping their employees who use tobacco to comply with the policy. In addition, HR representatives are available to attend department meetings to help assist employees with understanding the implications and extent of the policy.

As described in #2, patients receive educational information about Tobacco Use Disorder, information about treatment resources, and information about our Smoking and Tobacco Free Policy in preadmission packets, as well as on admission by nursing staff. This is reinforced with signage throughout the hospital, including advertising free nicotine gum available in the Pharmacy for all visitors.

MMC hires a contractor to patrol the campus and surrounding neighborhood to clean our grounds and neighboring streets. We spend $15,000 annually to keep the MMC campus and surrounding community clear of trash and cigarette butts.

Please see: Attachment A: *Smoking and Tobacco-Free Policy*

Attachment B: *Corrective Action Policy*

Attachment C: *Standards of Conduct*

**Tobacco Advertising**  
**Standard 4:** Advertisement or promotion of tobacco products is prohibited on the hospital’s campus and satellite facilities. This includes hospital publications and magazines subscribed to by the hospital for placement in waiting rooms.

**Requirement:** Describe efforts your hospital has taken to regulate magazines that have tobacco advertising. At least one strategy must be included to achieve this standard.

Hospital only allows magazines without tobacco advertising.

Stickers are placed on all donated or subscribed magazines that may contain tobacco

advertising.

Hospital removes tobacco advertising from magazines before allowing them in

waiting rooms or other facility areas.

Notices (posters, flyers, tent cards, signage, etc.) are placed in magazine areas stating

that the hospital does not support tobacco advertising.

Other (please explain): Sample Answer: See TAMC Directive #48, Section 1, paragraph 3. See TAMC Directive #63, paragraph 2, item 10. Advertising or promotion of tobacco products will be prohibited on any TAMC and TAMC affiliate property. This will include all hospital publications and magazines subscribed to by TAMC and TAMC affiliates for waiting area reading material.

**Tobacco Prevention & Treatment Education for Patients & Visitors**

**Standard 5:** Information about tobacco dependence and treatment, secondhand smoke, thirdhand smoke and local/statewide treatment resources are readily available to patients and visitors. For example, brochures about the Maine Tobacco Helpline are displayed in patient or visitor areas, patients are offered a proactive fax referral to the Maine Tobacco Helpline, hospital discharge paperwork includes treatment options and resources, patients are given information on the harmful effects of tobacco use and secondhand/thirdhand smoke and/or information on tobacco treatment methods and where to find resources are available to patients and families.

**Requirement:** Describe how these materials are accessed by patients and visitors.

Sample Answer: Information on the benefits of quitting smoking, tobacco dependence treatment, secondhand smoke and thirdhand smoke along with local/statewide treatment resources are communicated to patients and visitors. Various literature from the Breathe Easy, Maine QuitLink and other educational materials such as a passive smoking letter are given out throughout FCHN office practices and inpatient units (see attached Passive Smoking Letter). Educational material is available in waiting rooms, patient packets, and bulletin boards throughout FCHN, and with discharge instructions. Patients are informed of these resources during any tobacco counseling done by respiratory therapists, nurses, or Primary Care Physicians.FCHN is also affiliated with Healthy Community Coalition (HCC) have staff who are trained to counsel patients one-on-one on tobacco cessation and also educate patients or community members on the NRT treatments that are available to them for either no-cost or reduced rates. In the past year, HCC started a Tobacco Recovery Program that patients are referred to by physicians and nurses. Patients who enroll in the Tobacco Recovery Program work one-on-one with the Tobacco Treatment Specialist and staff where they receive counsel and support for their tobacco recovery journey. This program also hosts a monthly tobacco recovery group open to the public and hosted at the hospital where patients can meet in a safe environment to gain support from peers and staff to adopting a healthier lifestyle. *If patients are not open to the conversation about tobacco cessation they are directed to educational information available on HCC's website so they have the ability to self-educate on the harms of smoking and about available tips and resources including the Maine Tobacco Helpline. Utilizing the website privately may relieve pressure they may associate with conversations about their smoking habits with medical staff.*

**Evidence-Based Tobacco Treatment Training for Staff**  
**Standard 6:** The hospital organization supports evidence-based tobacco treatment training for staff by offering in-services on tobacco treatment and/or supports staff financially to attend trainings. Literature and resources are available on-site for staff. **Trained staff are available to provide treatment and counseling to tobacco-dependent patients.** Note:These trainings would typically have a CEU/CME attached to it.

**Requirement:** List the **number** of current employees who have been trained to deliver evidence-based tobacco treatment counseling. If there are current employees who have been previously trained in tobacco treatment, list the tobacco treatment related activities held over the **past year** that support continued education for tobacco treatment.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Promotion (i.e. including training opportunities in a staff newsletter) and support for tobacco education and/or continuing medical educational (CME) opportunities for hospital staff. **\*Platinum Level requirement is in addition to standard\***

**Requirement:** Describe how your hospital promotes trainings and list education materials that are available to your staff. Sample Answer: Our Tobacco Treatment specialists, as well as members of the Psychiatry Consultation and Liaison service, are financially supported to attend ongoing trainings through their continuing medical education benefit. Clinical staff attended outside educational programs specific to tobacco treatment including Basic Skills, Intensive Skills and the Annual Tobacco Conference. Approximately 35 medical students and 10 resident physicians are trained in house to complete Tobacco Treatment consultations. We will also be adding another staff member to our service at the end of October 2019, who will be trained, as well. While not a specific training, the Tobacco Treatment staff participates in quarterly conference calls with the Maine Health Center for Tobacco Independence staff to review current practice, identify areas of concern, and opportunities for collaboration. In addition, they meet semi-annually with other Maine Health hospital staff to share policies, treatment ideas, and to provide support.

**Patient Screening and Assistance for Tobacco Dependence**

**Standard 7:** All patients admitted to the hospital are screened for tobacco use, tobacco status is documented and patients are offered comprehensive treatment services during their stay, by designated staff. This includes tobacco dependence counseling/education at the bedside, clinical assessment and management for patients experiencing nicotine withdrawal, offering FDA-approved tobacco treatment medications, and referral to counseling post-discharge. Tobacco treatment services are evidence-based, as reflected in the Public Health Service Guideline: *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence, 2008 Update.*

**Requirement:** Describe how patients are made aware of these services; the ways your hospital delivers them and how designated staff members are responsible for implementation.

Sample Answer: Tobacco treatment support is available for all tobacco using patients admitted to the hospital. First, upon intake all inpatients are asked if they use tobacco quit and are provided with the “Quit Tobacco: Plan for Success” brochure. In the brochure information is available about RFGH’s Free Tobacco Support Group, Treatment Specialist and The Maine QuitLink. The brochure is also set up as a work booklet, allowing individuals to work through their own tobacco also asked if they would like to receive a call from the hospital’s Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist to learn about support programs and resources and fax referrals to the QuitLink if the patient is interested in receiving a call from them. Providers have referral to the Maine QuitLink and to local intensive one of the seven first line medications approved by the FDA to treat tobacco dependence, the same medication is continued if there are no contra-indications not currently on a specific medication to treat tobacco dependence and request medication support, the nicotine patch is offered to them if there are no contra-employees can provide treatment support at the bedside to inpatients, including physicians, respiratory therapists, RN’s, pharmacists and Tobacco Treatment approach to tobacco brief interventions by RFGH’s Tobacco Treatment Specialist. Several respiratory therapists have attended the Basic Skills training X of the hospital staff participated in the training.

**Tobacco Treatment Benefits**

**Standard 8:** Tobacco treatment services are a covered benefit in the hospital health insurance package for employees and their dependents. Benefits include coverage for counseling and medication for quitting tobacco, with minimal, or no barriers to utilization (i.e. copays, out of pocket costs, limits).

**Requirement:** Describe tobacco treatment benefits provided and how they are promoted to employees.

Sample Answer: Our employee health insurance programs offer 100% coverage for tobacco treatment medications with no co-pays or deductibles. The system-wide, eight week program “Quit for Life” benefits all employees for tobacco cessation. This is an on-line and phone based coaching program that is available in multiple languages. This program is the nation’s leading phone based tobacco cessation program and employs an evidence-based combination of physical, psychological and behavioral strategies to enable participants to take responsibility for and overcome their addiction to tobacco use. Using an integrated mix of medication support, phone-based cognitive behavioral coaching and web-based learning and support tools, the Quit For Life® Program historically produces an average quit rate of 49 percent for employers. Employees receive information about benefits at on-site events such as: the Annual Spring Employee Wellness Fair, the annual Fall Benefits Fair, the annual Great American Smoke-out and through open enrollment for benefits.

**Smoke-Free Community Lodging**

**Standard 9:** The hospital provides a list of local 100% smoke-free lodging for visiting patients and families in order to make healthy choices regarding their lodging. The list should be easily accessible and reviewed and updated annually.

**Requirement:** **Attach** the smoke-free lodging list that is provided to visitors and patients.

*SVH maintains a Local Smoke-Free Lodging Options brochure. The brochure is available at Central Registration and at the front desk of the hospital. The Community Health & Education department contacts local establishments annually to confirm and update information. See attachment for the Local Smoke-Free Lodging Options brochure.*

**Tobacco Funding and Donations**

**Standard 10:** The hospital has a written policy or position statement stating it refuses all donations from the tobacco industry, and divests itself of all tobacco company stock.

**Requirement**: Provide policy language, procedures and/or guidelines that explain the hospital’s position

on tobacco industry donations. By adopting a tobacco-free funding policy, NMMC affirms that it will not accept any donations from the tobacco industry and, as a result, will not let the tobacco industry use its good name to promote its products. Any and all inquiries from tobacco companies related to charitable giving will be referred to the Service Excellence and Communications Department. This policy will be upheld when addressing all inquiries from the tobacco industry.