Rocky Mountain Tobacco Treatment Specialist Certification (RMTTS-C) Program

About Our Program

Healthcare professionals and advocates are on the frontlines when it comes to tobacco cessation. With 480,000 preventable deaths annually from tobacco use in the U.S., interdisciplinary providers and advocates have a role in reducing unnecessary death and disability related to tobacco use. The Rocky Mountain Tobacco Treatment Specialist Certification (RMTTS-C) Program was developed to train healthcare, community, and public health professionals as well as appropriate health navigators and community health workers to become tobacco cessation champions for their organizations and communities. The goal of our program is to create the highest quality tobacco treatment specialist program based on current evidence-based treatment and expert clinical training. It was designed to provide a comprehensive, focused, and convenient process by which individuals master core competencies defined by the Association for the Treatment of Tobacco Use and Dependence (ATTUD) and can attain certification as a “Tobacco Treatment Specialist.”

The Behavioral Health and Wellness Program is committed to improving quality of life by facilitating evidence-based health behavior change for communities, organizations and individuals. BHWP has been engaged in tobacco cessation treatment, training, research, consultation and technical assistance since 2006. We have in over 40 states, promoting and fostering sustainable tobacco cessation initiatives. Over the years, this breadth of expertise has created a multi-disciplinary team of tobacco and health behavior change experts, uniquely positioning BHWP to offer the first ATTUD-accredited TTS-C Program in the Rocky Mountain Region and one of the few programs in the Western United States.

Course Overview

Who should take this course?

This course has been carefully constructed to meet the needs of professionals involved in the treatment of tobacco dependence across a range of disciplines and in a variety of settings. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Addictions Counselors
- Community Educators
- Dentists
- Health Academics
- Health Educators
- Health Policy Experts
- Health System Administrators
- Mental Health Professionals
- Nurses
- Nurse Practitioners
- Patient Navigators
- Peer Advocates
- Pharmacists
- Physicians
- Physicians Assistants
- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists
- Respiratory Therapists
- Social Workers
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Curriculum

This intensive 4-day course is comprised of nine separate modules. The course is generally structured so as to mirror the chronological process a practitioner might encounter as he or she works with a tobacco-dependent individual. Day 1 introduces the topic of tobacco use and dependence, working with priority populations, how to conduct an effective assessment interview, and the process by which a practitioner develops a solid, evidence-based treatment plan. Day 2 is devoted to effective treatment strategies including pharmacotherapy and counseling skills. Day 3 covers strategies to prevent and treat relapse, documenting and evaluating treatment outcomes along with other professional resources, and professional development and ethical practice. Day 3 also provides participants the opportunity to integrate treatment skills covered on Day 2 with hands-on, interactive activities, such as completing an assessment interview, developing treatment plans, practicing counseling skills, and working on relapse prevention in response to hypothetical case studies.

Course Outline — Day 1

Module 1: Tobacco Fundamentals. This module serves as an introduction to current knowledge of tobacco use, the scope of the problem, health impact, and the causes and consequences of tobacco use.

Learning Objectives:
1) Describe the impact of tobacco use and U.S. trends
2) Explain health consequences of tobacco use and the benefits of quitting
3) Provide information on tobacco products
4) Describe the physical and behavioral aspects of tobacco dependence
5) Introduce evidence-based tobacco cessation treatment strategies

Module 2: Priority Populations. Identifying and characterizing the specific treatment needs of priority populations with tobacco dependence allows practitioners to have greater impact with patients. This module will teach participants how tobacco use and dependence does or does not vary between sub-populations of individuals, and how to develop evidence-based treatment strategies for certain priority populations.

Learning Objectives:
1) Review prevalence and patterns of tobacco use for priority populations
2) Discuss treatment strategies specific to each population
3) Explore treatment recommendations for smokeless tobacco users and environmental tobacco smoke pollution
4) Discuss culturally competent counseling
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Module 3: Assessment. Conducting an effective assessment interview is a critical first step in helping individuals overcome tobacco dependence. This module will give participants concrete steps to obtain comprehensive and accurate data needed for treatment planning.

Learning Objectives:
1) Identify ways to begin work with individuals who may or may not be ready to change their tobacco use behaviors
2) Develop skills to obtain information, assess tobacco use, build rapport and engage in consultation and make referrals using a typical intake assessment
3) Review diagnostic criteria for tobacco-related disorders
4) Learn strategies to effectively complete a thorough assessment interview

Module 4: Treatment Planning. This module is designed to instruct participants on how to use information obtained during the assessment interview to create an appropriate, effective, and individualized treatment plan.

Learning Objectives:
1) Learn to plan individualized treatments that match information gathered through the assessment interview
2) Demonstrate ability to complete a collaborative treatment plan using evidence-based strategies
3) Describe and demonstrate an understanding of the referral process

Course Outline — Day 2

Module 5: Tobacco Treatment Strategies I – Pharmacotherapy. This module is designed to offer participants information on the physiology of tobacco dependence as well as a comprehensive array of treatment approaches for treating the physiological component of tobacco dependence. Participants will receive in-depth training on how to incorporate effective pharmacological treatment strategies to mediate the effects of withdrawal symptoms on tobacco cessation.

Learning Objectives:
1) Describe the biology of tobacco dependence
2) Describe the symptoms and duration of nicotine withdrawal
3) Provide information on:
   a. All approved tobacco dependence medications
   b. Second-line medications
   c. Combination therapy
   d. Alternative therapies
   e. Special considerations for specific groups
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Module 6: Tobacco Treatment Strategies II – Counseling. These two modules are designed to offer participants a comprehensive array of treatment approaches for treating the psychological and behavioral components of tobacco dependence, including cognitive and behavioral interventions as well as the Motivational Interviewing (MI) approach. Participants will receive in-depth training on how to effectively apply counseling theories and strategies to facilitate an individual’s commitment to change.

Learning Objectives:
1) Review counseling interventions for tobacco cessation best practices as recommended by the Public Health Service in their Clinical Practice Guideline
2) Learn processes and practices for cognitive and behavioral interventions
3) Learn processes and practices for group interventions
4) Explore ways to enhance behavior change by using the motivational interviewing approach
5) Demonstrate effective use of strategies to enhance motivation and encourage commitment to change

Course Outline — Day 3

Module 7: Relapse Strategies. Providing ongoing support for tobacco-dependent persons involves strategies for dealing with relapse. This module will instruct participants on methods to reduce relapse and provide modified treatment plans.

Learning Objectives:
1) Learn about relapse prevention and related concepts
2) Discuss strategies and skills to reduce relapse
3) Identify appropriate referrals to reduce relapse
4) Review treatment strategies for someone who has relapsed

Skills Integration: Practice Session. Training participants have the opportunity to practice implementation of knowledge and skills using case vignettes.

Learning Objectives:
1) Opportunity to practice skills presented in the RMTTS-C training
2) Experience the assessment interview, treatment planning, counseling and relapse prevention from different perspectives
3) Receive and provide feedback to facilitate learning and integration of information

Module 8: Documentation, Evaluation, and Professional Resources. Documenting tobacco use and keeping cogent, organized record of individual progress is important for individual treatment as well as program evaluation.

Learning Objectives:
1) Maintaining accurate records
2) Implementing a protocol to track follow-up
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3) Standardized methods for measuring outcomes
4) Accepted coding practices and reimbursement for treatments
5) Identify community resources for referral
6) Provide resources for individuals
7) Professional resources

Module 9: Ethical Practice and Professional Development. Keeping abreast of ethical practices and the latest developments in tobacco dependence treatment strategies keeps professionals at the forefront of their field. This module is designed to introduce participants to resources for continued professional development and consistent, ethical practice.

Learning Objectives:
1) Identify ethical practices in tobacco treatment
2) Review guiding principles for ethical practice
3) Explore ways to maintain professional standards of practice, including informed consent and confidentiality, cultural competence and professional boundaries

Examination

Participants will complete a multi-phase examination throughout the course designed to assess participant knowledge and retention of course content. For successful course completion, participants must score at least 140 points out of a possible 175 points (or, 80%) on a combination of the three exam parts. The entire examination process takes place onsite as part of the 4-day certification program; there is no take-home exam component. The examination will have the following format:

Part I. (50 points) Multiple Choice Quizzes (Early Morning of Days 2 and 3)
Two 25-item assessments of course material covered the preceding day

Part II. (75 points) Comprehensive Multiple Choice and Short Answer Exam (Early Morning of Day 4)

Part III. (50 points) Clinical Case Study Assessment (Late Morning and Afternoon of Day 4)
For the Clinical Case Study Assessment, participants will be asked to review one hypothetical case study and orally present 1) assessment questions to obtain a clearer understanding of tobacco use and tobacco use history, 2) potential motivations to stop tobacco use, 3) other contributing factors to consider given the individual’s unique presentation, and 4) an individualized treatment plan, including recommendations for tobacco cessation medication, counseling and consultations/referrals. Participants will then present the Clinical Case Study Assessment to a review committee of training faculty.

Participants who do not score at least an 80% on the exam will not qualify for TTS certification. They will be allowed to re-take the test again (remotely) at a later date for an additional fee.