



Hays County Tobacco Premium Policy Effective January 1, 2015

1. What is the Hays County Tobacco Policy?

All County employees enrolled in a Hays County Employee health insurance plan must certify their status as tobacco users or non-users. **Employees who do not certify their tobacco-use status** by turning in the Hays County Tobacco User Certification Form to Human Resources will be charged a \$30 monthly Tobacco User Premium via payroll deduction even if they do not use tobacco.

Beginning January 1, 2015 this policy will apply only to County employees (not spouses or family members) who are covered by the Hays County health insurance plans.

You must certify your status as a tobacco user or non-user via the Hays County Tobacco User Certification Form. The health plan offered by Hays County provides a tobacco cessation program to help tobacco users withdraw from nicotine dependence. If you would like to enroll in Quit For Life, or if you would like additional information regarding the program and also how to access the program online, please call the number on the back of your ID card.

2. What is considered a tobacco product?

Tobacco products are cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff, dip or any other product that contains tobacco. Electronic or e-cigarettes that do not contain tobacco and are designed expressly for smoking cessation are not considered tobacco products. Nicotine replacement products, such as gum and patches, are not considered tobacco products.

A tobacco user is a person who has used any tobacco products five (5) or more times within the past three (3) consecutive months.

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3. How do I certify my tobacco use or non-use?

The County will provide a Hays County Tobacco User Certification Form in your new hire or open enrollment packet for you to sign to verify your status. Falsifying the form can lead to significant penalties, including loss of medical insurance.

4. How much is the tobacco user premium?

The monthly Tobacco User Premium is \$30 for employees certified as a tobacco user. This is in addition to your monthly medical insurance premium.

5. How do I get help to quit using tobacco?

There are over-the-counter options and guidance that you can ask your physician or pharmacist about. Hays County will provide access to a wellness program available through the county's health plan for guidance and education toward healthy behaviors and decisions related to smoking.

6. What if I quit using tobacco?

If you have not used tobacco products five (5) times or more in the previous three (3) months, you can change your certification to non-tobacco user. Once you update the Hays County Tobacco User Certification Form, the monthly Tobacco User Premiums will end on the first day of the month following the receipt of the updated Hays County Tobacco User Certification Form in Human Resources.

7. What if my doctor says I can't quit?

If you have an uncontrolled health factor, you should submit a Hays County Employee Benefits Program Physicians Affidavit Form to Hays County Human Resources. You can submit this affidavit anytime – the premiums will be waived on the first day of the month following the completed affidavit's receipt in the Human Resources office.

8. What happens if I use tobacco products but I don't certify that I do?

You will need to change your certification status or risk a penalty, fraud investigation, or termination from the County health plans. Any member caught falsifying information will be charged the tobacco premium amount owed for the entire time the member was employed by Hays County during the period the tobacco premium was in effect.

The information provided here is also provided on the Hays County Intranet.



Hays County Tobacco User Certification Form

If you are enrolled in a Hays County health plan you must certify whether you have used or not used any type of tobacco products more than five (5) times in the last three (3) months. *Even if you don't use tobacco you must certify your status as a non-tobacco user.* Tobacco use includes but is not limited to cigarettes, pipe tobacco, cigars, snuff, dip or chewing tobacco products, or any other product that contains tobacco.

Information provided to Hays County is used in managing your benefits. Your certification changes will start the first of the following month after Hays County Human Resources receives your certification.

The tobacco premium is \$30 each month, via payroll deduction, in addition to your health insurance premiums if you are a tobacco user.

Failure to complete and submit to Hays County Human Resources the Tobacco User Certification Form will result in the \$30 Tobacco User Premium deduction, even if you are not a tobacco user. Subsequent changes to your tobacco use certification will be effective on the first day of the following month after Hays County Human Resources receives a new Tobacco User Certification Form.

Tobacco Use Certification

Printed Name _____

Employee ID or last 4 of SSN _____

Tobacco Use Yes _____ No _____

You must certify your understanding and agreement to the following:

-Tobacco products are cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, chewing tobacco, snuff, dip or any other products that contain tobacco and a tobacco user is a person who has used any tobacco product five (5) or more times within the past three (3) consecutive months.

-If I have used tobacco products as a tobacco user or start using tobacco products without notifying the Hays County Human Resources Department, via a Tobacco User Certification Form, I will be subject to the \$30 monthly premium for the entire time I was employed by Hays County during the period the tobacco premium was in effect and may be terminated from participation in the Hays County Employee health insurance plans.

-I will not be refunded any part of the tobacco user premiums.

-Under the penalties of perjury, the above information is true and correct. Providing or entering false information may disqualify me from continued coverage in the Hays County Employee health insurance plans. If I intentionally misrepresent material facts or engage in fraud, my coverage may be rescinded retroactively to the date of the misrepresentation or fraudulent act. In that event, I will receive thirty (30) days' notice before my coverage is rescinded. Further, if I start using tobacco products without notifying the Human Resources Department by submitting a Hays County Tobacco User Certification Form, I will be subject to the \$30 monthly premium for the entire time I was employed by Hays County during the period the tobacco premium was in effect and such failure to notify the Human Resources Department will constitute fraud.

Signature _____ Date _____