



Tobacco Premium

What is the tobacco premium?

Employees on a Pinellas County health plan who use tobacco will be charged a \$500 tobacco premium beginning April 1, 2022 unless they **complete a qualified tobacco cessation program between August 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022**. The premium does not apply to spouses.

What is the purpose?

Pinellas County is committed to the health and wellness of its employees. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability and death in the United States. The premium helps offset increased healthcare costs for Pinellas County and offers a financial incentive for employees to quit.

What tobacco products are included?

Cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco, dip, snuff, hookahs.

How would you define a tobacco user?

Someone who has used a tobacco product **at least once a week in the last three months**.

Does Pinellas County offer resources to help me quit tobacco?

Yes. See [Tobacco Cessation Program Options on page 2](#). Also view [Tobacco Cessation Resources](#).

What if I complete a tobacco cessation program in 2021?

Program completion prior to August 1, 2021 does not qualify for the 2022 premium waiver.

What if I complete a cessation program but don't stop using tobacco?

Quitting tobacco is not easy and may require several attempts for success. Employees who successfully complete a qualified program between August 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022 are not required to quit tobacco.

What if I quit tobacco but I don't complete a qualified cessation program?

The tobacco premium will remain in place.

What if I need nicotine replacement therapy such as gum or patches to quit tobacco?

If you attend a Tobacco Free Florida class, you may be eligible to receive free patches, gum or lozenges if medically appropriate.

The following FDA-approved tobacco cessation aids are available at no cost through your UnitedHealthcare benefits with a prescription:

- Nicotine gum
- Nicotine skin patches
- Nicotine lozenges
- Nicotine inhaler (Nicorette® inhaler)
- Nicotine nasal spray (Nicotrol®)
- Zyban (bupropion)
- Chantix (varenicline)

Electronic cigarettes are not approved by the FDA for therapeutic use.

How will you know if I use tobacco?

During Annual Enrollment for benefits coverage, each employee [attests to their tobacco use](#) in OPUS.

Will you find whether I use tobacco from a biometric screening or random drug test?

No.

How are the tobacco premium funds used?

Pinellas County applies the monies to the Health Fund which pays for healthcare claims and other related expenses.

(See page 2 for Tobacco Cessation Program Options)

Tobacco Cessation Program Options

If you successfully complete a qualified tobacco cessation program such as the three free programs listed below, the tobacco premium will no longer apply.
To participate in another tobacco cessation option, please contact the [Wellness Program](#) before beginning to determine whether it qualifies.

1. VIRTUAL CLASSES

- Tobacco Free Florida offers *Group Quit*, a free support group led by a trained specialist. You need to attend all 4 one-hour classes in the 4-part series. (NOTE: The one-day *Tools to Quit* classes do not qualify.)
- You may be eligible to receive free nicotine patches or gum, if medically appropriate.
- **CURRENT CLASSES**
To register for a class series listed below, call the local Tobacco Free Florida agency, Area Health Education Center, at (813) 929-1000.
 - **Virtual: Thursdays, 7:30 to 8:30 am, September 23 – October 14, 2021**
 - **Virtual: Wednesdays, 11:30 to 12:30 pm, September 29 – October 20, 2021**
 - **Virtual: Mondays, 12:30 to 1:30 pm, October 11 – November 1, 2021**
 - **Virtual: Fridays, 12:00 to 1:00 pm, November 5 – December 3, 2021 (no class on November 26)**
 - **In-person: Pinellas County Justice Center, 14250 49th Street North, 2nd Floor Clerk's Training Room, Clearwater; Thursdays, 12:00 to 1:00 pm, September 23 – October 14, 2021**

2. PHONE

- United Healthcare offers one-on-one phone support with a Wellness Coach. Participate in 3 to 4 weekly telephone coaching sessions, up to 30 minutes each, at times convenient for you.
- To register, call (800) 478-1057 and select 2 for a Wellness Coach.
- Pinellas County Employee Benefits will notify you of successful completion by email.

3. ONLINE

- Rally Coach, in partnership with United Healthcare, offers a free online program to help you create a self-paced personalized tobacco quit plan.
- To register, visit [Rally Coach](#).
- The *Quit Tobacco* program provides online lessons with strategies and resources such as videos and activities.
- If you need support, you have access to direct coaching through live chat, secure email, or telephone.
- Pinellas County Employee Benefits will notify you of successful completion by email.

For more information on the tobacco premium, contact Wellness at wellness@pinellascounty.org or by phone at (727) 464-3367, option 1.

www.pinellascounty.org/hr/tobacco