

# NEWS RELEASE



Arizona Department of Health Services  
150 North 18th Avenue  
Phoenix Arizona 85007  
[www.azdhs.gov](http://www.azdhs.gov)



Magellan Health Services of Arizona  
4129 E. Van Buren Street  
Phoenix, Arizona 85008  
[www.magellanofaz.com](http://www.magellanofaz.com)

## **The Arizona Department of Health Services and Magellan of Arizona Launch Tobacco Cessation Initiative for Individuals with Serious Mental Illness**

### ***Wellness initiative also targets tobacco use by behavioral health staff***

PHOENIX (Sept. 1, 2010) – The Arizona Department of Health Services' (ADHS) Division of Behavioral Health Services and Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease are partnering with Magellan Health Services of Arizona to reduce the use of tobacco by individuals diagnosed as seriously mentally ill (SMI) and by the behavioral health staff who serve them. The initiative will begin in Maricopa County and parts of Pinal County with Magellan, the Regional Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA) for that geographic area, before expanding to include partnerships with other RBHAs across the state.

Funded by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with monies designated by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, this initiative will target those who are chronically mentally ill. These individuals on average die 25 years younger than the general population. Many of the causes of early death can be related directly or indirectly to tobacco use.

“This program is a key component of Magellan’s larger health, wellness and longevity clinical initiative,” said Dr. Richard Clarke, CEO of Magellan Health Services of Arizona. “Through this initiative, we will improve the length and quality of life of the people Magellan serves by creating programs and a mindset throughout the system to address mind and body health and wellness. This involves developing a model of care that combines physical and behavioral health and focuses on strengthening the whole health of the individual.”

Dr. Rodgers Wilson, acting chief medical officer, Division of Behavioral Health Services, cited statistics about smoking and individuals with a serious mental illness, “According to studies published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and the *Journal of Dual Diagnosis*, people experiencing a serious mental illness are twice as likely to smoke as other persons. It is estimated that in Arizona 70 percent of individuals with serious mental illness and 35 percent of behavioral health staff currently smoke.”

Wayne Tormala, bureau chief for ADHS' Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease, commented on these statistics, “With numbers like these, we saw a growing need to address the whole health of individuals with mental illness and to help them break this destructive addiction. Our initiative

features an integrated model that provides access to tobacco cessation assistance in treatment, support and case management facilities through on-site services or through referral to the Arizona Smokers' Helpline (ASHLine).”

The two-year initiative focuses on improving access to the ASHLine tobacco quitline by SMI clients and increasing the number of SMI clients who utilize quitline services. The ultimate goal is to increase the total number of clients with serious mental illness who quit. The long-term plan is to take the program statewide.

In support of the initiative, Magellan has worked with its provider network organizations to identify clinics and staff who want to become part of the initiative and see tobacco cessation as a treatment issue and not a lifestyle choice.

“Our Saguardo and Cave Creek Clinics are excited to be taking the first steps in an initiative that will help ensure the wellbeing of their clients and themselves,” said Anita Barnas, vice president of Adult Services for Southwest Network. “Staff members who are seeking to break the tobacco habit can empathize with their clients and will provide moral support for them.”

The staff at these facilities will actively incorporate tobacco cessation into individual service plans and will engage with the ASHLine quitline as they identify clients who use tobacco. They will refer clients to the ASHLine, which will assign an intake specialist. The intake specialist will evaluate the client to determine readiness to quit and if services are desired, the client will be assessed for medication.

All clients and clinic staff will receive two weeks of free patch/gum/lozenge medication. After two weeks, those enrolled in the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) may obtain additional medications and will receive medication management assistance. Those not enrolled in AHCCCS will be referred to their primary care physician. All clients will have access to telephone and internet quit coaching and counseling.

The initiative also provides additional support by trained pharmacists. This support includes completing medication assessments and providing suggestions to psychiatrists regarding possible interactions or addressing their concerns about clients' quitting tobacco and/or using medications.

Magellan became “smoke free” on August 1, 2010. Tobacco use by employees and visitors is no longer allowed at any Magellan facility across the country.

For more information about the Tobacco Cessation initiative and Magellan's health, wellness and longevity clinical initiative, access [www.MagellanofAZ.com/Wellness](http://www.MagellanofAZ.com/Wellness).

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### **About Magellan Health Services of Arizona**

Magellan Health Services of Arizona is the Regional Behavioral Health Authority for central Arizona, which includes all of Maricopa County and part of Pinal County. In this role, Magellan serves as a critical point of connection to the more than 80,000 individuals who have experienced life challenges as a result of mental illness and substance abuse. Magellan gives these individuals voice and choice to realize their desired outcomes and supports them with caring, unrivaled customer service that is sensitive to the diversity of our communities. For more information, visit

[www.MagellanofAZ.com](http://www.MagellanofAZ.com) or call Magellan of Arizona at (800) 564-5465, TTY (800) 424-9831. Information is available in English and Spanish.

**About the Arizona Smokers' Helpline (ASHLine)**

The Arizona Smokers' Helpline offers effective, research-based tobacco cessation services to Arizona residents through personalized telephone coaching. Quit assistance is also available 24/7 at [www.ashline.org](http://www.ashline.org). ASHLine is a partner of the Arizona Department of Health Services Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease (ADHS BTCD) and is funded through taxes on tobacco products. ASHLine services are free to all Arizonans and are available toll free at 1-800-55-66-222 or at [www.ashline.org](http://www.ashline.org).

**Media Contacts:**

*ADHS BTCD*

Mary Ehlert, MS, ABC  
602-542-0886 - Direct  
602-540-6897 - Cell  
[EHLERTM@azdhs.gov](mailto:EHLERTM@azdhs.gov)

*Magellan*

Greg Taylor  
(602) 652-5810 – Direct  
(602) 670-6292 – Cell  
[GATaylor@MagellanHealth.com](mailto:GATaylor@MagellanHealth.com)

*Magellan: Spanish Language Media*

Ramiro Camarillo  
(602) 797-8282 – Direct  
(602) 284-9683 – Cell  
[RCamarillo@MagellanHealth.com](mailto:RCamarillo@MagellanHealth.com)