Tobacco Testing Process: Frequently Asked Questions for Managers and Employees

1. What is the tobacco testing process?

Last fall, several entities of the Johns Hopkins Health System implemented a voluntary tobacco testing process for employees who elect benefits through the various Johns Hopkins participating health care providers—EHP, CareFirst and Kaiser. Participating entities include The Johns Hopkins Hospital, The Johns Hopkins Health System Corporation, Johns Hopkins Medicine International, Johns Hopkins Community Physicians, Johns Hopkins HealthCare, Johns Hopkins Home Care Group, Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, Suburban Hospital, Sibley Memorial Hospital and Johns Hopkins All Children’s Hospital.

Johns Hopkins employees who enroll in health care benefits may voluntarily agree to be tested for tobacco. They will sign a consent form verifying they are tobacco-free and agreeing to take the test. Employees who test negative for tobacco will receive a non-tobacco credit in the 2018 calendar year. Employees enrolling in health care benefits who do not wish to receive the credit do not need to participate in tobacco testing.

There are also reasonable alternatives to receive the credit for employees who wish to stop using tobacco.

2. What type of test will be administered, and how long will the process take?

A carbon monoxide (CO) test will be administered. The test will take a few minutes, and you will receive your results afterward. As part of the process, you will be asked to breathe into a CO monitor device, which detects the level of CO in your lungs. If you test negative for tobacco, there is no action needed on your end. If you test positive, you will be allowed to take a second test, which is a saliva test. Your saliva sample will be sent to LabCorp, and results will be mailed to you within two to three weeks.

3. Why is Johns Hopkins offering a non-tobacco credit?

Actively supporting a healthy workforce is one of the goals of the people priority, as outlined in Johns Hopkins Medicine’s Strategic Plan. Tobacco use remains one of the most important preventable causes of death and disability in the United States today. As a leader in the health care industry, Johns Hopkins recognizes the harmful health effect of smoking and is committed to supporting health and wellness efforts of our employees. As part of our desire to promote employee wellness, we will reward those employees who elect medical benefits and are non-tobacco users and continue to offer resources for those who wish to quit. Therefore, there is an eligibility process for employees who want to receive the non-tobacco credit.

4. How much is the tobacco credit and when does it take effect?

The tobacco credit is $20 per pay period for those enrolled in the medical plan beginning Jan. 1, 2018 ($11.03 for Johns Hopkins Hospital represented employees).
5. **Who will be conducting the tobacco testing?**

Johns Hopkins has partnered with Interactive Health to administer the tobacco testing for our employees.

6. **Will every employee have to participate in tobacco testing?**

No, not every employee will have to participate in tobacco testing. The tobacco testing is voluntary and only for those who elect medical benefits and wish to receive the non-tobacco credit.

7. **Will my manager find out if I’m using tobacco?**

No, your manager will not find out if you are using tobacco. The information collected during the test is not shared with your manager.

8. **Who is considered a tobacco user?**

Whether habitual or social, a tobacco user is any employee who currently uses tobacco. This may include cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, pipe tobacco, snuff, dip, e-cigarettes or any similar tobacco-related product.

9. **Why are e-cigarettes included in the tobacco use definition?**

At this time, Johns Hopkins has decided to include e-cigarettes in the tobacco use definition. This decision was based on a variety of factors.

E-cigarettes, or electronic cigarettes, are typically battery-operated products designed to deliver a heated solution to the user. They may contain nicotine, flavoring agents and other chemicals. The health effects of e-cigarettes and the vapor they produce are scientifically uncertain at this time.

**What we do know:**

- E-cigarettes are NOT regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- Limited testing by the FDA revealed safety and quality concerns.
- Nicotine is addictive in any form.
- E-cigarettes also contain detectable levels of known carcinogens and toxins.

10. **If I want to quit using tobacco products prior to the tobacco testing, what resources are available to me?**

You can contact Healthy at Hopkins Wellness Services at 410-955-9538 to discuss resources, such as coaching through Johns Hopkins Employer Health Programs, monthly Freshstart on-site tobacco cessation classes and one on one sessions will also be available.

11. **If I am a tobacco user, are there other ways that I can earn the non-tobacco credit?**

Yes. If you cannot certify that you do not use tobacco products, there are several ways you can still receive the credit. You can:

- Complete a tobacco cessation telephone coaching program offered through your insurance carrier (EHP). For more information, call 1-800-957-9760 or email healthcoach@jhhc.com.
• Complete a tobacco cessation class offered at your worksite at no cost to you or a class in your community at your expense. The approved classes are the American Lung Association’s Freedom From Smoking program and the American Cancer Society’s Freshstart program.

• Submit a letter on your physician’s letterhead stating that (1) it is unreasonably difficult for you to quit smoking, (2) it is medically inadvisable for you to try to quit tobacco or (3) you are working with your doctor on a tobacco cessation plan.

12. If I choose to complete a tobacco coaching program through my insurance carrier or on-site tobacco cessation class at my workplace, when will I receive the non-tobacco credit?

Once you complete the coaching program or on-site class, you will receive a completion certificate. To submit your certificate or letter, go to online benefit enrollment portal https://my.jh.edu/portal/group/myjhmi/staff and click on “Enrollment” under JHHS Resources. On the Welcome page, go to “Enroll” under My Benefits. On the Benefit Enrollment Instructions page, click “Continue” and under Qualifying Life Events, click “Tobacco Cessation” to upload your certificate/documentation. Upon HR review and approval your credit will be entered effective the first day of the following month.

13. If I work remotely or am not located near a Johns Hopkins facility, what options are there for me to get tested?

If you work remotely, you are encouraged to get tested at the nearest Johns Hopkins facility. Otherwise, you will have the option to go to a LabCorp facility for urine testing.

14. Can I schedule a time to complete the tobacco testing?

Yes, you can schedule a time to do your tobacco testing online. More information is posted on the Tobacco Testing Process page http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/human_resources/benefits/tobacco-testing.html

15. If I work at one location but want to get tested at another location, is this an option?

Yes. Regardless of where you work, if you would like to get the tobacco testing done at another participating entity, you are able to do so. There are a few events that are not open to all employees – those will be noted when setting up an appointment on the schedule.

16. If I have any questions regarding the tobacco testing process, whom should I contact?

You can contact the HR Service Center at 443-997-5400, extension 9.