

# Q&A: Tobacco surcharge policy

**Updated September 1, 2021**

Stryker introduced a tobacco surcharge in 2014 as part of our ongoing commitment to your good health.

If you enroll in a Stryker medical plan during annual enrollment, as a new hire or as a result of a qualifying life event and affirm that you and/or your covered spouse/domestic partner have not used tobacco within the last 6 months, you will not be charged the tobacco surcharge.

If you enroll in a Stryker medical plan during annual enrollment, as a new hire or as a result of a qualifying life event, and you and/or your covered spouse/domestic partner indicate that you have used tobacco within the past 6 months and have not completed the Stryker provided tobacco cessation program in the current year, you will be charged the Tobacco Surcharge.

## **1. Why does Stryker have a Tobacco Surcharge?**

The primary goal of our health and wellbeing programs is to help employees and their family members reach and maintain good health. Consider some facts about tobacco use:

- In the United States, tobacco use is responsible for nearly one in five deaths. (Source: Cancer Facts & Figures 2014)
- Lung cancer is the most preventable form of cancer death and is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States for both men and women. (Source: Cancer Facts & Figures 2014)

## **2. What are other companies doing? Is it typical for companies similar to Stryker to have a tobacco surcharge?**

Mercer's 2016 National Survey of Employer Sponsored Health Plans shows that 48% of companies with 20,000+ employees have a tobacco/non-tobacco contribution differential.

## **3. Why is Stryker focusing on tobacco rather than other problems like weight?**

According to the American Cancer Society®, tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable illness and death in the United States. We know quitting is hard: only four to seven percent of Americans quit smoking without help. (Source: American Cancer Society, Guide to Quitting Smoking 2014) We're helping our employees and families become tobacco-free to improve the health of our total population, and to combat rising healthcare costs.

## **4. How is tobacco use defined?**

Tobacco products include cigarettes, electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), cigars, pipes and any form of smokeless tobacco (i.e. "chew"). Tobacco use is defined as any use of tobacco, regardless of the frequency or location, within the past 6 months. The rare, once per month or less on average use of a tobacco product (such as a celebratory cigar) does not constitute tobacco use for purposes of being charged the surcharge.

**5. What if I only smoked once (a cigar while golfing) in the past 6 months?** The rare, once per month or less on average use of a tobacco product (such as a celebratory cigar) does not constitute tobacco use.

## **6. How will Stryker know if I use tobacco?**

Every year during Annual Enrollment you will be asked to affirm your tobacco use along with your spouse/domestic partner's tobacco use by certifying your tobacco status.



### **7. How will you monitor smoking status?**

Integrity is one of our core values and we trust that our employees will make the appropriate choice when selecting their status. However, an employee who falsifies his/her non-tobacco-use status will be immediately subject to the surcharge, and may face termination of employment and/or termination of coverage in the Stryker medical plan.

### **8. Why is everyone defaulted to a tobacco user and not a non-tobacco user? Why does Stryker require everyone go in the system and make the change?**

We will rely on our employees to self-report their own tobacco-use status (and the status of their covered spouse/domestic partner, if applicable) during Annual Enrollment. When you enroll in benefits, you will be asked about use of tobacco products of any kind (including smoking and smokeless varieties). If you don't certify your tobacco status, we don't have any support or evidence that you do not use tobacco. Similar to other Stryker policies, we need you to affirm your status and agree to the tobacco use policy.

### **9. When can I complete the Tobacco Use Affidavit?**

You must certify your status each year during Annual Enrollment to certify your tobacco status. You may also visit the Benefits Enrollment Site at any time throughout the year and declare a change in Tobacco Status life event to update your tobacco status.

### **10. Why do I have to certify my Tobacco Status each year?**

Many factors may change throughout the year including marital status, dependent status and tobacco status. We want to make sure we have the correct and most up to date information on file each year. Recertifying your tobacco status ensures that Stryker has your most up-to-date status.

### **11. My spouse/ domestic partner uses tobacco, but I don't. My spouse/domestic partner is covered by the Stryker medical plan; will I be charged the Tobacco Surcharge?**

Yes. Since your spouse/domestic partner uses tobacco and is covered by the Stryker medical plan, you will be charged the Tobacco Surcharge.

### **12. My spouse/domestic partner and I both use tobacco. Will we be charged the Tobacco Surcharge for both of us?**

The Tobacco Surcharge is applied once per employee. The Tobacco Surcharge will be the same if you, your spouse/domestic partner or both are a tobacco user.

### **13. If my adult child is covered on my medical plan and they use tobacco, will I be charged the tobacco surcharge?**

No. You will only be charged a surcharge if either you or your covered spouse/domestic partner are tobacco users and have not completed a Stryker provided tobacco cessation program or quit tobacco.

### **14. If I use tobacco, how can I remove the Tobacco Surcharge?**

Tobacco users can remove the Tobacco Surcharge by enrolling in and completing a Strive Tobacco Cessation Journey or by quitting tobacco use for at least 6 months. If both you and your spouse/domestic partner are tobacco users, both need to enroll and complete the Stryker provided tobacco cessation program or quit tobacco use for at least 6 months to qualify.

If you need to recertify or change your tobacco status, you must do so within the current calendar year.

### **15. I quit tobacco this year but will not be "tobacco free for 6 months" when I need to indicate my tobacco status. How do I avoid the Tobacco Surcharge?**



You must enroll and complete the Stryker provided tobacco cessation program or wait until you are tobacco free for 6 months and affirm your tobacco status by declaring a Change in Tobacco Status life event through the Benefits Enrollment Site.

**16. What will Stryker do with the additional funds from the Tobacco Surcharge?**

Any additional funds will be used to offset healthcare costs for all who participate in the medical plan, including the portion paid by Stryker.

**Vapes, E-Cigs, Hookah Pens and other Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS):**

**1. Why are ENDS considered tobacco?**

In 2016, FDA finalized a rule extending CTP's regulatory authority to cover all tobacco products, including electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) that meet the definition of a tobacco product. FDA now regulates the manufacture, import, packaging, labeling, advertising, promotion, sale, and distribution of ENDS, including components and parts of ENDS but excluding accessories.

**Stryker provided tobacco cessation program**

**1. How do I enroll in the tobacco cessation program?**

Follow the steps on the flyer on the next page to enroll in the program.

**2. How does my spouse/domestic partner enroll?**

Follow the steps on the flyer on the next page to enroll in the program.

**3. How long will it take me to complete a Strive Tobacco Cessation Journey?**

Journeys are completed over approximately 20 days by completing one step per day.

**4. If I complete the program but am unable to quit smoking, do I still have to pay the Tobacco Surcharge?**

No. You can certify your tobacco status and choose the option that states "I am a tobacco user and have completed a Stryker provided Tobacco Cessation Program within this calendar year."

**5. How long will it take to remove the Tobacco Surcharge?**

The Tobacco Surcharge will be removed within four pay periods following certification of your tobacco status. Once you update your status to non-tobacco user, you will be reimbursed for any surcharges you paid during the year.

**6. Can I quit "cold turkey" or use another program to meet the requirements?**

If you quit on your own, you can affirm your tobacco status by logging into the Benefits Enrollment Site and declaring a Change in Tobacco Status life event. You can also complete a tobacco cessation program recommended by your physician to remove the surcharge.

**For questions and assistance**

**Have questions about the tobacco surcharge? [Contact the myHR team.](#)**

# Strive tobacco cessation Journeys



Sign into Strive at [strive.stryker.com](https://strive.stryker.com)

1. Hover over health and select Journeys.
2. Scroll to the **“Being tobacco free”** section and choose one of the Journeys.