

Statement published on pairing smoking cessation with lung cancer screening

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Benjamin A. Toll, Ph.D., and Nichole A. Tanner, M.D., co-directors, Medical University of South Carolina Hollings Cancer Center Lung Cancer Screening Program. Credit: EA Thompson, Medical University of South Carolina

Researchers, including an associate professor from the Medical University of South Carolina Hollings Cancer Center, say smokers who go to a doctor to be screened for lung cancer should also be encouraged to quit smoking during their visit, according to a paper co-written by Benjamin A. Toll, Ph.D., associate professor of public health at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC).

Toll is the senior author of the position statement, published online February 24, 2016, in *Cancer*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society.

The article references a recent U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommendation that heavy smokers undergo a yearly screening for lung cancer. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has also approved lung cancer screenings as a preventive service benefit.

Screenings are an opportunity to encourage smokers to quit, but the Task Force does not provide specific details for how smoking-cessation treatment should be offered in conjunction with [lung cancer screening](#), according to the authors.

"We are very happy about this Task Force recommendation and the approval of lung [cancer screening](#) as a benefit by CMS. Lung screening with low dose CT will save many lives by detecting lung cancer at earlier, treatable stages," Toll said. "However, it is critical that we provide tobacco treatment in conjunction with lung screening. Most patients will not have lung cancer, and we do not want this to be perceived as a "free pass" to smoke. We also wanted to highlight the multiple benefits of smoking cessation."

"Moreover, research by my colleague and co-director, Dr. Nichole Tanner, convincingly shows that lung cancer risk is reduced even further when you combine lung cancer screening with smoking cessation," he said.

The Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco (SRNT) and the Association for the Treatment of Tobacco Use and Dependence (ATTUD) developed this guideline for addressing smoking among smokers who seek lung cancer screening.

"Quitting smoking is the most important step patients can take to minimize risk for lung cancer and to also improve overall health," Toll said. "Combining [smoking cessation](#) with [lung cancer screening](#) will maximize the benefits of screening."

Provided by Medical University of South Carolina

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