



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate approves help for smokers wanting to kick the habit *SB 734 requires insurers to help pay for smoking cessation tools*

SALEM – The Senate approved legislation this morning that will expand access to cessation programs for people who want to quit smoking. Smoking continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in the United States and a major contributor to health-related expenses.

“I’m supportive of any steps we can take to help people give up smoking,” said Senator Bill Morrisette (D-Springfield), chief sponsor of the bill. “Encouraging healthy habits is crucial to improving public health and reforming our health care system as a whole.”

SB 734 requires health insurers to provide payment, coverage, or reimbursement of up to \$500 for a tobacco cessation program. Such programs can include counseling, medications, or a combination of both.

“Tobacco use cessation treatments are the single most cost-effective health insurance benefit that we can provide,” said Senator Alan Bates (D-Ashland), a practicing physician. “Giving up smoking isn’t easy for many people. This is a tool that will help them kick their habit and move towards a healthier lifestyle.”

The bill will now go to the House for consideration.

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