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News Release



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## Health Promotion Council Intensifies Fight Against Tobacco with STAR Accreditation for Comprehensive Smoking Treatment Program at Penn Medicine’s Abramson Cancer Center, Aiming to Curb City’s Staggering Tobacco Related Casualties

[Philadelphia Leads Major U.S. Cities in Smoking Rates, With Tobacco Responsible for Over 3,500 Deaths Annually](#)

**Philadelphia, PA April 30, 2024** – Health Promotion Council (HPC), a subsidiary of Public Health Management Corporation, has granted its fourth Smoking Treatment Accreditation & Recognition (STAR) to the Comprehensive Smoking Treatment Program at Penn Medicine’s Abramson Cancer Center. This accreditation is part of a concerted effort to enhance smoking cessation services and reverse the city’s dire tobacco statistics.

Philadelphia has been identified as having the [highest smoking prevalence](#) among the ten largest cities in the United States, with tobacco use claiming more than 3,500 lives yearly in the city alone and affecting over 40,000 with illnesses such as asthma, COPD, cancer and lung disease. These grim statistics underscore the critical public health challenges Philadelphians face, as tobacco-related deaths exceed those from homicide, AIDS, car accidents, diabetes, and illegal drugs combined.

Jamie Magee, Director of Tobacco Prevention and Control Services at HPC, emphasized the urgency of expanding effective tobacco treatment programs: “Philadelphia’s high smoking rate presents a formidable challenge, but also a critical opportunity for intervention. The STAR accreditation of Abramson Cancer

Center is a key part of our strategy to enhance access to life-saving tobacco cessation and treatment services throughout the city.”

Dr. Frank T. Leone, Director of Comprehensive Smoking Treatment Programs at Penn Medicine and STAR Advisory Board Member, expressed his excitement about the accreditation: "Having been a part of several STAR accreditations across the region, it's particularly gratifying to see Penn Medicine's Abramson Cancer Center, my own place of work, receive this accreditation. This recognition not only highlights the hard work and dedication of our team but also strengthens our commitment to combating the tobacco crisis right here in Philadelphia, where the need is so great. I am thrilled that we are enhancing our capabilities to offer top-tier tobacco treatment services, particularly for those who are also facing a cancer diagnosis.”

The STAR program, managed by the Health Promotion Council, is pivotal in supporting healthcare providers to integrate comprehensive tobacco dependence treatment into their operations, enhancing the overall effectiveness of public health interventions aimed at reducing tobacco use and its devastating impact.

Studies have shown that quitting smoking can improve cancer treatment effectiveness and decrease the risk for recurrence. By stopping, a more fully functioning immune system works better to fight cancer.

For more information about the STAR program and other initiatives, please contact the Health Promotion Council.

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#### **About Smoking Treatment Accreditation Recognition (STAR)**

Smoking Treatment Accreditation & Recognition (STAR) is a tobacco dependence treatment accreditation program funded through a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Health and managed by Health Promotion Council, in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania. STAR's mission is to support, recognize and promote organizations who are integrating comprehensive tobacco treatment into their existing healthcare workflow. STAR's vision is to standardize best practices across PA healthcare systems.

#### **About Health Promotion Council (HPC)**

Health Promotion Council's mission is to promote health, and prevent and manage chronic disease, especially among vulnerable populations, through community-based outreach, education, and advocacy. HPC possesses more than 40 years of experience in chronic disease prevention and management, including asthma, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, nicotine addiction, and obesity. HPC reaches more than 20,000 people across Pennsylvania each year through direct service programs targeting the reduction of health disparities, particularly among low-income and racial/ethnic minority populations. HPC is a subsidiary of Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC), a nonprofit public health institute that creates and sustains healthier communities.