

New Guidelines for Treatment of Tobacco Dependence Released

U.S. Public Health Service Guidelines Focus on Need for Comprehensive Approach to Helping Smokers Quit

Atlanta 2008/05/07 -The U.S. Public Health Service today released an updated version of the clinical guidelines for treating tobacco dependence. Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence: 2008 Update contains strategies and recommendations designed to guide doctors and other medical professionals to help smokers quit. The guidelines, updated for the first time since 2000, call attention to the need for clinicians to understand that there are multiple effective treatment options for tobacco dependence. The guidelines emphasize the benefits of group and individual counseling sessions and the use of medications in helping smokers to be successful in their quit attempt. There is also new evidence of the need to consider tobacco use as a chronic disease and to treat it as such through multiple interventions. The guidelines highlight the need for tobacco dependence treatment strategies to be integrated into the health care system as there is new evidence that health care policies, such as insurance that covers tobacco dependence treatment as a benefit, impact the likelihood that smokers will receive effective treatment and successfully quit smoking.

Tobacco use remains world's most preventable cause of death, claiming the lives of 438,000 Americans each year and millions more globally. Smoking accounts for at least 30 percent of all cancer deaths and 87 percent of lung cancer deaths. It is associated with an increased risk of at least 15 types of cancer.

"There are 45 million smokers in the U.S. and 70 percent of them say they would like to quit smoking," said John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., chief executive officer of the American Cancer Society. "This updated clinical guideline on the treatment of tobacco dependence provides physicians and other health care providers, administrators and insurers, and smokers themselves, with clear, useful information on how to stop smoking and stay tobacco-free. It is critical that clinicians utilize these guidelines to stay current on the latest information that will help their patients to quit and to do so successfully. The Society is proud to endorse this important resource in the fight to reduce tobacco use."

The American Cancer Society offers smokers who want to quit a clinically proven, confidential, free telephone-based counseling program, Quitline. Quitline is available in 12 states and the District of Columbia, as well as in more than 100 businesses and health plans nationwide. Since its inception in 2000, Quitline has provided support to more than 320,000 smokers. Studies have shown that more than 40 percent of people who were contacted six months after completing the Quitline program remained smoke-free, putting the Society's quit rates among the highest in the country. Smokers who are seeking to quit can reach Quitline toll-free at 1-800-ACS-2345 or can log onto www.cancer.org/greatamericans to embark on a personal plan to quit.

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering, and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy, and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States. For more information anytime, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

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