

June 2013

Dear Colleague,

Nationally, smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease, killing more than 1,200 Americans each day. For every person who dies from tobacco use, another 20 suffer from one or more serious smoking-related illnesses. Reducing smoking is one proven way we can help people live longer, healthier lives. In April of this year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched the second *Tips From Former Smokers* national tobacco education campaign (*Tips 2013*) to raise awareness about the suffering caused by smoking and secondhand smoke exposure and to encourage smokers to quit.

As a health care provider, you know smoking has a negative impact on your patient's health. Smoking-related illnesses include: cancer of the lungs, stomach, mouth, esophagus, pancreas, and kidneys; heart disease; and bronchitis, emphysema, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). The good news is that over 70% of tobacco users visit a health care provider each year. As a provider, you have a unique opportunity to motivate your patients to quit and improve the chances that they will be successful.

As part of the *Tips 2013* campaign, there is a "Talk With Your Doctor" initiative. CDC, in partnership with a number of national physician groups, launched "*Talk With Your Doctor*" with a national press event on May 22. The initiative provides a great opportunity for you to ask your patients about their tobacco use and encourage them to make a quit attempt. You are one of the most important sources of health information for your patients and their families. To maximize this opportunity, I am reaching out to you to ask that you use your influence as a health care provider to help your patients quit smoking.

We at the Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services (NDHHS), Division of Public Health are inviting you to join us along with the CDC, American Medical Association (AMA), American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and American College of Physicians (ACP). We can work together to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke and to motivate smokers to quit.

In the past, your office likely received a variety of tools from the NDHHS Tobacco Free Nebraska program, including patient room posters with tear-off cards promoting the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW), flyers and clinician aids. Additionally, you can access a variety of materials including waiting room posters at: www.cdc.gov/tips. A looped video for use in clinic waiting rooms may be downloaded from www.plowsharegroup.com/cdctips. Nebraska-specific resources can be ordered at: QuitNow.ne.gov. At the same time, your patients will be seeing *Tips* ads airing in Nebraska.

You see the adverse effects that tobacco brings to your patients every day. You know tobacco use drastically increases the health care burden from chronic diseases. Let's join together in helping people live longer, healthier lives.

Sincerely,



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