



spotlight on health

A Team Effort To Help Smokers Quit



(NAPSA)—Most people, even those who smoke, know that smoking is bad for them. In fact, about 70 percent of smokers say they want to quit. So why do people still smoke?

Leading health groups say it's because smoking isn't just a "bad habit." It's a medical condition that can be hard to beat because people who smoke often become addicted to the nicotine in cigarettes. Smoking also can become a big part of people's daily routines.

Breaking the addiction to nicotine and changing behaviors related to smoking are two major challenges for many smokers. This may explain why smoking is still the No. 1 preventable cause of disease and death in the United States, killing about 438,000 people each year.

When someone is addicted to smoking cigarettes, wanting to stop often just isn't enough. In fact, less than 5 percent of people

who try to quit on their own are able to stay smoke-free even for six months.

Smokers need support to help them quit for good. Smokers can get support by:

- Working with a doctor to set up and stick to a quit plan
- Asking friends and family to help them stay away from cigarettes and manage "triggers" that remind them of smoking
- Taking anti-smoking medication and participating in counseling to help them quit (Research shows this combination increases smokers' chances of quitting.)

"Today, most people know why they should quit smoking, but the big question is how," said Matthew P. Bars, MS, CTTTS, program director of the Tobacco Cessation Program of the New York City Fire Department and the Palisades Medical Center IQuit Smoking Program. "If you are ready to quit smoking, visiting your doctor is

one of the most important first steps you can take."

A doctor can inform patients about options to help them stop smoking and create a plan to quit that meets their needs, according to Bars. The plan may be based on a patient's previous quit attempts, lifestyle, and general health.

It's also important for smokers to check in with their doctors to help them stay on track as they try to quit. This may prevent smokers from slipping up and starting to smoke again.

For more information about how to quit smoking, people can visit a Web site developed by Pfizer called www.mytimetoquit.com, and they can also talk with their doctors. The Web site has a useful checklist (www.mytimetoquit.com/content/doctor_checklist.pdf) to make it a little easier to talk to a doctor about quitting.

This information is courtesy of Pfizer Inc.