



Consumers Helping  
Others Improve  
Their Condition by  
Ending Smoking

February 2012

CHOICES  
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## ONE DAY WORKSHOP

**FREE**

### Peers Helping Peers: Innovations in Tobacco Dependence Education and Intervention



#### Inside this Issue

- The cost of smoking prevention and treatment is worth it* 2  
By Deidre Stenard
- The day I quit smoking was November 2* 2  
By Agnes Gaffing
- Inheritance* 3  
By Jacquese Armstrong
- CHOICES: What I learned* 3  
By Lynette Johnson
- Choices Changes Minds at National Consumer Conference* 4  
By Marie Verna
- Healthy Living - A Poem* 4  
By Wayne Holland
- Dear CHOICES* 4  
A letter by Theresa
- Small Cigars: What if they were taxed?* 5  
By Yasmin Halim
- Are you interested in participating in a Research Study?* 5

The CHOICES Program has partnered with the RWJMS Division of Addiction Psychiatry to offer a full day CE Activity entitled “Peers Helping Peers: Innovations in Tobacco Dependence Education and Intervention.” Please join us in our effort to create a strong peer network that encourages mental health consumers to address their tobacco use.

**Who should attend?** This workshop was created to help mental health agencies to develop and implement peer outreach program to address tobacco based on the CHOICES model. Registration is open to peer specialists and mental health professionals who want to communicate with and educate their peers about smoking.

**What are some of the topics that will be covered?** Topics include: the health consequences of tobacco use, prevalence of tobacco use among mental health consumers, motivational interviewing and delivery of the CHOICES

educational and personalized feedback sessions.

**Date:**  
Thursday, September 13, 2012

**Time:**  
8:30 to 4:30 pm

**Location:**  
Liberty Plaza, 335 George Street,  
New Brunswick, NJ

**How to Register:**  
Please e-mail  
[dooleypc@umdnj.edu](mailto:dooleypc@umdnj.edu) or call  
732-235-3361 for a registration  
packet.

Registration is complementary which includes tuition, parking, certificate of attendance and hand-out materials. Travel not included.



## The Cost of Smoking Prevention and Treatment Is Worth It

By: Deidre Stenard, CTA

I have been fortunate to quit smoking with the help of the Tobacco Dependence Program in New Brunswick, New Jersey, which used to be funded by the State of New Jersey. I attended a support group and got help from doctors in my journey toward quitting smoking and I attended one of the support groups there for 3 or 4 years. I have gone on to work for CHOICES, and in spreading the message about the dangers of tobacco, I realize that the same help afforded me when I was quitting smoking is no longer available due to funding cuts from the State of New Jersey.

According to Dr. Biren Saraiya, the medical director at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Hamilton, the funding for smoking cessation programs has dropped to almost nothing in the State of New Jersey. New Jersey had been funding its comprehensive tobacco control program at a level of \$30 million a year in 2001. Those funds came from a Master Settlement Agreement with the tobacco companies. That money is gone because the funds were used to balance the budget. According to the report "Up in Smoke" released by the American Cancer Society, New Jersey in its current fiscal year will spend almost

nothing on tobacco control. The state provided only 1 percent of the amount recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), with most of that paid for with federal grants. In fact, the State of New Jersey actually turned people away who wanted to stop smoking because of lack of funding. Obviously, I'm glad I'm not one of those people who were turned away, but I'd like for people to have the same experience I had and get support for quitting smoking.

Also, the danger of smoking lives on. According to the American Cancer Society's projections, 4,160 New Jerseyans will die of lung cancer this year. And the cost of smoking is greater than the cost of smoking prevention. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) \$193 Billion will be spent on smoking-related health care and productivity loss PER YEAR. \$193 Billion is greater than the amount spent on smoking prevention. The Centers for Disease Control suggest that New Jersey spend \$120 Million per year on smoking prevention. The State of New Jersey is now spending 1% of that. It would be nice to see New Jersey put its dollars into smoking prevention!

Each person who stops smoking is greatly improving their health and will save a lot of money. I personally have saved \$23,000 because I'm no longer buying cigarettes. My health has

improved immeasurably, and I've also earned over \$20,000 additional dollars working for CHOICES in the 4 years since I've stopped smoking. I don't know if I would have been able to stop smoking without the help of the Tobacco Dependence Program in New Brunswick, because I was a heavy 3-pack-a-day smoker and I needed the help of a support group. So, quitting smoking has really changed my life, and I'd like others to have the same opportunity I've had.



## The Day I Quit Smoking Was November 2

By: Agnes Gaffing  
OASIS Partial Care

It was so hard to quit smoking! I think it is no good to smoke, so I can talk to people about how hard it was for me to quit smoking. Now I can help people quit smoking. It took me close to a month to quit by talking to everybody about how hard it was. It can give you a lot of illness, like cancers, and you can die from smoking. Smoking is no good for you at all.

*OASIS is a partial care program located in Hammonton, NJ. Mr. Bob Craven of OASIS has been a champion for the CHOICES program since it's inception, always going the extra mile to help his clients.*

## Inheritance

By: Jaquese Armstrong

It's been 10 months and I still sometimes want a cigarette. I have to reinforce myself by thinking, but I'm a non-smoker.

Ironically, a CHOICES presentation started me thinking seriously about quitting. They came to our peer support training class with their breath monitors, jars representing the amount and look of mucous in your lungs, fact sheets on the various toxins in tobacco aside from nicotine, et al. How could you not consider quitting? But what clenched it for me was my grandfather's cough. My grandfather died about 3 decades ago from emphysema.

My grandfather had crystal blue eyes with bright green flecks (and yes, he was black). But, when there was a change of emotion, those eyes turned green. As the emphysema got worse, he had a cough that would go on for minutes and get out of control. And, in the greenness of his eyes, I could see an honest fear as he shook uncontrollably. That should have made me stop smoking then. But, I was young, immortal and depressed.

My grandfather's cough clenched the deal for me, even from the grave; because 10 months ago, I had that cough.

It was a cough that you can't control ending in a gag as if you would throw up. I felt as if

I was coughing up my lungs and then gagging on them. My insides shook. I thought of my grandfather.

When I reported this cough to my primary care physician, very concerned, he said, "It's a smoker's cough." As if to say: I've asked you to quit, you won't, these are the consequences.

But there was another reason. Having over the past 5 years through proper medication and recovery tools regained a healthy sense of life, I want to do everything to preserve it. I am now hopeful for the future. So, not only did I quit smoking after 35 years, which my college friend of 32 years cannot believe, I go to the gym if only to cycle or walk for 30 minutes. I am now trying to change my eating habits, with the help of a wellness coach. It's important to me to eat healthier, thereby losing weight, even though it's hard. We all know how easy it was to blow up on psychotropic drugs.

However, even with all this in my head, I remember that I thoroughly enjoyed smoking cigarettes. The only thing that could really make me give it up, was my grandfather's cough. So, I did.



## CHOICES: What I Learned

By: Lynette Johnson

I attended the CHOICES 4 day training August 29-September 1, 2011 in Roscommon, Michigan. I learned that when you smoke you inhale up to 4000 chemicals including these poisons that are found in the following products.

Acetone: Paint Stripper and Nail Polish Remover

Ammonia: Floor Cleaner

Arsenic: Ant Poison

Benzene: Industrial Solvent/Fuel, Dyes, Synthetic Rubbers

Butane: Lighter Fluid Key Component of Gasoline

Cadmium: Used in Car Batteries

Carbon Monoxide: Poisonous gas in car exhaust

DDT: Insecticides

Formaldehyde: Embalmers use to preserve dead bodies

I also learned that people have choices to stop smoking and can use different kinds of medication to help them quit. The Nicotine Patch, Nicotine Gum, and Nicotine Lozenge,, Nicotine Inhaler, Nicotine Nasal Spray, Bupropion. You and your doctor will need to discuss which medication or medications will be best for you when you try to stop smoking.

*Lynette Johnson is a Certified Peer Support Specialist At Community Network Services in Farmington Hills, MI. She has initiated a Tobacco Dependence Treatment group at her facility as a result of her training, which is slated to begin in March, 2012.*



## CHOICES Changes Minds at National Consumer Conference

By: Marie Verna

CHOICES Co-Founder, Marie Verna, presented at the national consumer conference, Alternatives, funded by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The event, which was held in Orlando, Florida in October, attracted over 800 national advocates and featured a Wellness track on the integration of physical and mental health.



Kyle Zagorski (shown here) with Marie Verna collaborated on a workshop about tobacco cessation and highlighted CHOICES as a model education program based on peer support.

Kyle wore a cigarette costume during the conference to highlight the need for advocacy about and treatment for tobacco cessation and to attract people to the workshop. He is originally from New Jersey and successfully quit smoking

while working with Donna at the Tobacco Dependence Clinic, when it was located in New Brunswick, where the CHOICES program offices are located.

The workshop was attended by a wide variety of consumers who wanted accurate information about nicotine replacement therapy and the availability of support for beating addiction to nicotine. One person who is actively and successfully recovering from heroin addiction said, "Right now, I need cigarettes because I use them when I'm getting an urge for a heroin fix. But when I get that under control, I will quit cigarettes too."

Many people who manage both mental illness and substance dependence or abuse learn, through CHOICES, that nicotine is just like any other addictive substance. So the skills people need to recover from alcohol or drugs are very similar. When they

get support and treatment—and high quality education provided by CHOICES—their odds of quitting increase exponentially.

After the workshop, attendees expressed interest in finding out how to build a CHOICES program in their state. We'll be working with SAMHSA to continue to spread the word around the country and to encourage the administration to fund programs like CHOICES nationwide.

## Healthy Living

A Poem by Wayne Holland

Everybody's taking what life is giving

The truth is it's about Healthy Living

For me, I left the tobacco alone.

I have much more fun with a saxophone

Try to work on your diet

Get Healthy food and try it.

No drugs or alcohol

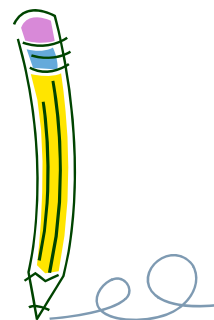
For they make people sick

Try, try to be Healthy, that is the trick.

Find yourself a hobby

That will be fun for you.

Try Healthy Living, it's what you need to do.



Dear CHOICES,

My name is Theresa, a.k.a. "Sun Sweet Mystery." Wow, three and a half years later, I'm still smoking. However, I learned discipline, menopause and its symptoms. I smoke less. I want to quit and go back to being a non-smoker. I'm also a singer, so it would benefit me greatly.

*Continued on Page 5*

Keeping busy helps me too. But like before, physical pain is the “corker.” That is when I’m not myself and I smoke the most. Do not let cigarettes make you it’s slave. Don’t start. If you just started, stop now. Eating is the one thing. In 2008, when I wrote my first article I lost a lot of weight but I still smoked. Hopefully I will quit this year. Maybe I’ll quit when the physical pain goes away. I have to see. It’s definitely not easy to stop. But you can, when you accept all the things that go with quitting. Cutting back is something else you can do. Keep your smoking, and to one place, clean your lips and hands extra clean. Witch Hazel removes nicotine from your lips and hands. The songbirds sing in a band with musicians: “Sun Sweet Mystery” of UMDNJ, Steve J., Doug G., and Theresa S.



### Small Cigars: What if they were taxed?

By Yasmin Halim

I was reading an article online which you can read here yourself here: <http://www.njspotlight.com/stories/12/0125/0231/>

I was surprised to find out that there were bills introduced, in the last state legislative session, S1946 and A2875, that would raise taxes on the small cigars that many people switch to when cigarettes get too expensive. The bill did not pass this time but what if it did? How would it make you feel?

**Angry? Anxious? Hopeless?**  
There is another option, another more empowering choice. You can choose to quit smoking on your own terms. There is help out there but you need to reach out and ask for it. I have faith that you can do it.

Right now, it costs between \$2.80 - \$3.40 to buy a pack of the small cigars. The tax would increase it to be \$4.70 - \$5.40. Taxes on tobacco products go into a general state fund. The assemblywoman who introduced the bill is planning to reintroduce the bill this session with language stating that some of the money will go toward smoking cessation efforts.

If you have been contemplating quitting smoking, check out your options. You can contact the NJ QuitLine at 1- (866) NJ-STOPS in either English or Spanish. If you are on Medicare, Medicaid, or a commercial insurance then contact your plan to see what smoking cessation treatment is available. Every plan is different so if you are having difficulty figuring it out, ask someone for help. You can do it. Just take it one step at a time and one day at a time.

*Cigar smoking has similar consequences to cigarette smoking, including 4 to 10 times the risk of dying from oral, esophageal or laryngeal cancer in comparison to nonsmokers.*



### Are you interested in participating in a Research Study?

Having the motivation and making the commitment to quit smoking is a great first step towards becoming smoke free. However, anyone who has tried to quit smoking knows how challenging it can be. Having the determination to quit may not be enough - you may need some help.

UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School is conducting a study to help smokers quit. If you're ready to quit smoking and are between the ages of 18 and 75 years old, currently smoke ten or more cigarettes per day and can commit to participating for 24 weeks, you may be interested in a research study which is being conducted to evaluate the use of investigational drugs to aid individuals in their quest to quit smoking.

To help you quit, smoking cessation counseling and all study related medical care will be provided at no cost. You may also be reimbursed for your time and travel. To receive more information about this study and how you can participate, please call Dr. Jill Williams at 732-235-4600.



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**CHOICES  
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Suite 105  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901**

**The CHOICES team will come to you!**

**The CHOICES team of peer advocates will visit your group or program in New Jersey and provide mental health consumers with education about the consequences of smoking and tobacco products along with information regarding treatment resources available to make quitting easier. Call us at 732-235-8232 to set up a date and time.**



*CHOICES is a partnership between UMDNJ-RWJMS Division of Addiction Psychiatry, the Mental Health Association of New Jersey (MHANJ) and the NJ Division of Mental Health Services and funded by the NJ Division of Mental Health Services .*