

CHOICES

Consumers Helping
Others Improve
their Condition by
Ending Smoking

Spring 2006

Volume 1, Issue 4



Happy Birthday CHOICES !

By Martha Dwyer

What a fruitful first year it has been! CHOICES proves what can be accomplished when group and individual forces join together.

CHOICES was created May 1, 2005 thanks to the vision of Dr. Jill Williams, Director of Mental Health Tobacco Treatment Services, at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Robert Wood Johnson Medical School (UMDNJ-RWJMS), funding from the American Legacy Foundation, and the partnership of UMDNJ-RWJMS, the Mental Health Association in New Jersey (MHANJ) and the State of New Jersey Mental Health Services (DMHS).

The official kick-off for CHOICES was celebrated in Trenton, New Jersey on June 15th, 2005. By the end of July two Consumer Tobacco Advocates, Wayne and Yasmin, had been hired and trained. They have been working tirelessly ever since, under the supervision of Program Coordinator, Martha Dwyer. Wayne and Yasmin have carried their message to over 1200 consumers that smoking is harmful and that treatment works. They have also met with nearly 200 consumers individually to provide personal feedback regarding the health and financial consequences of their smoking. Since last August they have traveled to 38 self-help centers, mental health programs and health fairs. They also participated in three conferences in New Jersey attended by mental health consumers and staff.

Over the past year we published four issues of the CHOICES newsletter and created a CHOICES website, www.njchoices.org. We always welcome and encourage consumers to

submit contributions to both the newsletter and website. We want to hear from you!

While CHOICES is still in its infancy, the response from consumers has been enthusiastic. We are pleased to report that CHOICES has been funded for another year by the American Legacy Foundation and the New Jersey Division of Mental Health Services.

Helping Smokers with Mental Illness Quit

If you've ever thought about quitting smoking, there is a state-of-art quit smoking program going on at UMDNJ. The program called TANS (Treating Addiction to Nicotine in Schizophrenia) is specifically designed to help people with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder quit smoking.

TANS is the most intensive quit smoking program available for people with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder.

TANS uses one-on-one talk therapy along with the nicotine patch to help people quit smoking. All treatments are free.

All counselors working on TANS are specially trained in this treatment. Several consumers who have been through the program have quit smoking. For more information about TANS please contact Barnabie Agatep at 732-235--3904.



We are looking to hire two new Consumer Tobacco Advocates who will be part of our tobacco-advocacy team with members from UMDNJ and the MHANJ. **See page 5 for more information.**

Tobacco Addiction Is No Longer My Affliction

By Beth M. Schneider/Szapucki

I quit smoking and it wasn't easy —
I did it to please me —
and most of all my dad —
who quit smoking 25 years ago and is now battling
lung cancer.

I woke up one morning and called my father and
said " Dad, I am turning myself in to the Tobacco
Clinic "

I felt like a prisoner and in a way I was — smoking was my ball, chain and life sentence.
So, I made a choice and it was the right decision — for today I am smoke free.

Let me share with you some of what I went through and perhaps it will inspire and encour-
age those of you having difficulty —

it was a difficult task — addiction is tough —

food and alcohol and drugs were a piece of cake dealing with until I tried this.

Also — possessing a psychiatric diagnosis did not help the situation any
but smoking was my last cheap thrill and I wanted to quit and I did alright----

so here I am----

a schizophrenic with a past history of an eating disorder, with addictive tendencies related to
drugs and drinking -

how was I going to shrug this smoking thing?????

well, we started with the patch and that didn't work for me-----so we moved on to the nicotine
spray and that was my answer---just shoot this spray up my nostril and I
felt better----

I backslid a few times but did not give up---

I curled up into a ball and rocked back and forth one day but made up my
mind that if this is what I had to go through to get this demon out of my
body I would do it- and it passed---

and I am no longer possessed by smoking----

so as I am writing this today I am thinking of my past and how I have
overcome addictions and am no longer a toxic time bomb

I made my Dad proud—we both quit

I no longer need any form of tobacco or tobacco products
and have moved on to a new addiction

Clothing — which I now have money to buy because—

I QUIT SMOKING !!!!

is there a clothing anonymous program available??

You can e-mail Beth at [mistygypsy02 @aol.com](mailto:mistygypsy02@aol.com)
or read some of Beth's other poems on line at
<http://www.poetry.com> - search the name Beth
Schneider

- then Schneider, Beth Michelle

- [Cowgirl In The Snow](#)

- [Don't Nod](#)

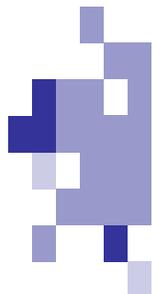
- [Shed My Boots](#)



CHOICES ART GALLERY

Visit the new CHOICES ART GALLERY on line at <http://www.njchoices.org>. This painting was done by our
Consumer Tobacco Advocate, Wayne Holland.

If you would like to share your art, contact us today!





Update on

NEW JERSEY Smoke-Free Air Act

By Dr. Jill Williams

No smoking! You may have already noticed that your favorite restaurants, bowling alleys or bingo games no longer allows smoking in the building.

New Jersey is now one of 11 states that have made the decision to ban smoking in public places. Many believe a smoking ban is crucial in helping to protect New Jerseyans from the dangers of secondhand smoke. This is especially important to people who work in businesses where smoking is common.

The New Jersey Smoke-Free Air Act was passed overwhelmingly by the New Jersey Legislature in 2006. Governor Codey signed the legislation into law on January 15, 2006. It went into effect on April 15, 2006.

The law requires smoke free environments in almost all indoor workplaces and places open to the public including places of business and service-related activities.

How does this law affect mental health consumers in NJ?

Consumers will no longer be allowed to smoke in the places listed below. Even outdoor places where smoking is allowed will have signs saying that smokers must be at least 25 feet from the building. People who disregard the smoking law face a \$250 fine. Some of the sites that must be smoke-free include:

- offices, factories, and government buildings

- restaurants, bars, clubs, theatres
- bowling alleys, race tracks, bingo sites
- shopping malls
- all schools, child care facilities, museums, churches and places of Worship
- health care facilities and nursing homes
- hotels, public buses (including stations and platforms), parking garages
- apartment building lobbies

Smoking is still allowed (and the law does not apply) in NJ casinos, private homes and residences, and private automobiles.



Jill Williams, MD is an Associate Professor of Psychiatry at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Division of Addiction Psychiatry and a national expert in treating tobacco dependence in people with behavioral health problems.

My Journey with CHOICES by Yasmin Halim

Some people might wonder how it was that I came to become a Consumer Tobacco Advocate in the CHOICES program. For one thing, I have never smoked. I also don't have many people in my immediate family who smoke. But I was still very interested in helping smokers. Some of you might wonder how could I possibly be good at it?

The reason is my passion. I believe in you,

Continued on page 4

Word Puzzle

						⁴ P			
		² N		³ D					⁵ T
	² C								
¹ S						³ H	⁷ E		
				⁶ R		⁴ S			
⁵ C									
⁶ S									

Down

1. Making preparations to quit smoking can help you to be more s _ _ _ _ _ .
2. N _ _ _ _ _ is the addictive ingredient in cigarettes.
3. Although most smokers think about quitting someday, it can be helpful to set an exact day to try to stop smoking. This is call the "Quite D _ _ _ "
4. Nicotine p _ _ _ _ , nicotine gum and nicotine lozenge are available in stores without a doctor's prescription.
5. T _ _ _ someone you are thinking about stopping smoking. This can be a friend or significant other. Let them know when your Quit Date will be so they can help you.
6. R _ _ _ _ _ other's rights to breathe clean air.
7. CHOICES' main goal is to e _ _ _ _ _ consumers about the consequences of smoking.

Across

1. When you s _ _ _ _ , your body gets used to having nicotine in it every day.
2. Some people smoke so much each day that they have a c _ _ _ _ _ _ in their mouth all the time.
3. Ask your family and friends how they feel about your smoking. Ask them if they would be able to h _ _ _ you when you try to quit.
4. Smokers with mental illness can receive tobacco dependence treatment and receive money for participating in a research s _ _ _ _ .
5. Lung c _ _ _ _ _ is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States.
6. S _ _ _ _ _ suffer more from pneumonia or acute bronchitis than nonsmokers.

My Journey (continued)

in all of us. We can help ourselves together, lift each other up. We can all be peer advocates for each other in some form. Does it matter if we have different gender, ethnicity, spiritual ideas, diagnosis, education, or are a smoker or non-smoker? Some people out there in the world may believe we are a society's throw-away, beyond help, but I know different now. There are so many times that I feel hopeless, worthless, and ashamed because I have a mental illness. "I've made such a mess of my life," I ruminate. I still hope there is someone somewhere that has faith in me, thinking I can improve if I just kept trying and take a risk, even though, with all my being, I can't believe it right then that I am capable.

Many times, I resent that I am dependent on someone else to help me. "I should be able to do it all for myself," I think. But I admit I need other people, not to do things for me but to learn from and much more importantly, for encouragement, to counter-act the defeatist thoughts that seem to endlessly run through my head. Maybe you know some of them? "I want to give up," "I can't do it," "I will never move forward"

Having this job, meeting you all, seeing you working so hard in your recovery, helps me just as much, if not more so, in mine. Working with others has awakened my brain and allowed me to believe that I can have a life worth living and not just exist. I was surprised the first time I heard from a peer that I inspired her and gave her hope that recovery is possible. Then I realized that others do the same for me; in fact we're getting better together. So, I hope if you see me at your program or somewhere, you'll give me a chance. I want to talk to you. Please know I'll never judge a person for lighting up.

Answers to the puzzle are on our website at <http://www.njchoices.org>

You can contact Yasmin at yhalim@mhanj.org



CHOICES is growing!!

Focus on and /or Thoughts on Smoking By Leonard Craparotta, Jr.

I quit smoking for a number of reasons.

Cigarettes are bad for your health and I had a bout with cancer in 2003.

Not only are cigarettes bad for your health, but they also cost a lot of money. I can think of better things to spend my money on than cigarettes.

My family and friends don't want me to smoke.

I have seen other people die because of cigarettes. Smoking can shorten some people's life spans.

I want to thank and pray for everyone at the Tobacco Dependence Program. Because of Stacy and Dr. Williams and all of you who talked to me and helped me, I have been able to stay smoke-free.

When I go to church I try to remember to pray for all my friends at the Tobacco Dependence Program.

It's a rough road ahead and sometimes I am tempted to smoke but I try not to give into the temptation. I hope and pray to God to give me strength not to smoke. I don't want to smoke again. I will try my best not to smoke.

Thank God for all the help and support I have. Hopefully the future will be promising.

Lenny just celebrated his 2nd year smoke-free.

A little something for Choices By Heidi Kenvin

I sit back and think after 33 years of being a smoker, thinking of quitting or even trying to quit. I've come a long way. The cigarettes had me, I could not stay stopped.

I guess around 5 years or so I came to UMDNJ and was in one of the studies and tried to stop.

For the past 5 years it was: not smoking, then smoking, then smoking more and more.

I left UMDNJ and made a choice to come back here with the help of family, friends and the use of nasal spray, I am smoke free all of 304 days.

It was the hardest thing to kick. Having mental illness does not make it any easier.

I didn't give up — I kept trying. I feel so much better.

It may have taken me a while but that's okay. I'm smoke free. Thanks to all the help I had and for all the help I am still getting. Keep trying Don't give up.

Heidi says you can do it And thanks to all of you who stood by me

and helped me through it and thanks to me staying smoke free!

CHOICES ("Consumers Helping Others Improve their Condition by Ending Smoking") is a program designed to help smokers with mental illness in NJ.

We are looking to hire two new Consumer Tobacco Advocates who will be part of our tobacco-advocacy team with members from UMDNJ and the MHANJ. The Consumer Tobacco Advocates will be paid to work part-time as outreach workers to other consumers or agencies in New Jersey. The Consumer Tobacco Advocates must be non-smokers (quit more than one year) who are friendly and willing to talk to other consumers about their tobacco use. The goal of the Consumer Tobacco Advocates is to provide education and encouragement to other smoking consumers. The position begins June 1, 2006.

To qualify for the position applicants must:

- Be a mental health consumer.
- Be a non-smoker (quit more than 1 year).
- Have good oral and written communications skills.
- Have the ability to interact with community agencies.
- Have a valid NJ driver's license and a car.
- Have basic computer skills

Interested applicants should contact Martha Dwyer at UMDNJ—732-235-4873

CHOICES is supported by a grant from the American Legacy Foundation & the NJ Division of Mental Health Services.



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Join our FREE MAILING LIST— Please Print:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Telephone (_____) _____ - _____

Email: _____

Send this form to: CHOICES c/o Martha Dwyer,
 UBHC, D-437, 671 Hoes Lane, Piscataway, NJ 08854

You can submit an article to this newsletter, contact Nancy at nancy@nj.choices.org or szkodnna@umdnj.edu or via snail mail to Martha Dwyer, UBHC, Room D-437, 671 Hoes Lane, Piscataway, NJ 08854.

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These materials do not necessarily represent the views of the Foundation, Foundation staff, or its Board of Directors.



Second Hand Smoke Hurts Everyone

Infants exposed to second-hand smoke are at twice the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or crib death (SIDS) than unexposed infants?

Dogs that inhale second-hand smoke are three times more likely to develop lung or nasal cancer, birds can experience eye irritation and respiratory problems and cats can suffer from squamous cell carcinoma (skin cancer).

Involuntary smoking causes diseases including lung cancer. Exposure to second-hand smoke has been linked to many adverse health effects including heart disease, nasal sinus cancer, cervical cancer, miscarriages, stroke and breast cancer.

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