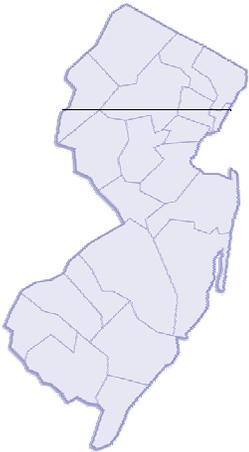


NJ Stands out at 13th World Conference on Tobacco OR Health

by Marie Verna



On July 12—15, 2006 in Washington, DC, New Jersey's CHOICES program, once again, stood out among hundreds of workshops, panels and institutes in five major tracks related to tobacco: people, policy, practice, producer and product. CHOICES project coordinator, Martha Dwyer, and Mental Health Association in New Jersey (MHANJ) partner,

Marie Verna, represented the program at a poster session held during lunch on the last day of the conference.

Attendees who stopped at the poster noted that CHOICES was the only conference event dedicated to the topic of tobacco cessation among people with mental illness. Although they described various projects around the United States designed to address this serious issue, they were all interested in hearing more about our program's Consumer Tobacco Advocates and their unique ability to connect with consumers because of their firsthand experience.

Most of the experts in tobacco and mental health expressed difficulty in their states in getting providers, family members and administrators to address the issue because of the myths about consumers "needing" to smoke and "their lack of desire" to quit. CHOICES program materials and MHANJ's tobacco survey results provided evidence that an estimated 65% of consumers actually want to quit smoking and have tried many times to do so. What's missing are tobacco-cessation services, especially those covered by Medicaid long enough to be effective in our popula-

tion of heavy smokers.

While tobacco researchers and policy makers have made great strides in educating youth, women, minorities and citizens of worldwide countries about the risks of smoking, the CHOICES program appears to be out in front in providing these services to people with mental illness. Let's hope that next year's conference contains more evidence like that found by CHOICES! Let's hope that researchers and policy makers realize that this population matters too!

To read more about the conference, visit their website at: <http://www.2006conferences.org/t-index.php>

Grim Reaper

by Wayne Holland

I've smoked cigarettes

With real regrets.

They say tobacco is a thriller.

It's more like a killer.

People say you can die

Walking across the street

But you don't jump into the fire

Just because you're feeling the heat.

I knew cigarettes were not good.

It was hard to put them down

Like I knew I should.

I was getting into smoking deeper and deeper.

I knew I didn't want to see the grim reaper.

I tried and tried till eventually I quit.

I won't miss the grim reaper

Not even a little bit.

Tobacco Dependence Clinic Questions and Answers

By Donna Richardson

What is the Tobacco Dependence Clinic?

We are a treatment program for people who want to quit using tobacco. We are trained in Internal Medicine, Psychiatry, Psychology, Social Work and Addiction. We are funded by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services. We are part of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's School of Public Health.

Who is eligible for treatment?

Anyone who lives or works in New Jersey can come for treatment. We see people who smoke cigarettes, who smoke cigars, who chew tobacco, or who smoke pipes. We see people who are thinking about quitting and people who want to quit, people who are worried about someone else's tobacco use. People with physical health problems, people with mental health problems, and people with good health, of all ages, come to the Clinic for help with tobacco dependence.

What kind of treatments do you offer?

We like to say we offer "state-of-the-art treatment". That means our treatments are scientifically sound or based on the latest scientific evidence. We believe the best help combines education, help with behavioral change and medicines that help with physical withdrawal or cravings. Treatments are tailored to the needs of

each person.

We offer group treatment and individual treatment. Six specific medicines are helpful: nicotine patch, nicotine gum, nicotine lozenge (Commit), Nicotrol Inhaler, Nicotrol Nasal Spray, Wellbutrin/Zyban/Bupropion. There will soon be another: Chantix/Varenicline is expected to become available in August, 2006.

Where are you located?

Our address is 317 George Street, 2nd floor, Suite 210, New Brunswick. Our phone number is 732 235-8222. Our website is: <http://www.tobaccoprogram.org/> We are open from 8:30am-5 pm, Monday through Friday. We are available in the evening by appointment. Ask for Donna Richardson or Stacey

Tuesday Group at the Tobacco Clinic

By Stacey Zelenetz

Zelenetz.

The Clinic at the UMDNJ-Tobacco Dependence Program has a weekly group that meets on Tuesday mornings. The members of this group all have two things in common - they all are mental health consumers who want to try to quit smoking. Many have successfully quit smoking with the help of this group. The group leader is Stacey Zelenetz.

Members of the group recently discussed many of the benefits of not

smoking and would like to share their list of:

Top Reasons Not To Smoke

- We are saving a lot of money
- We are not coughing
- We have a healthy environment at home
- There is no dirty film on everything any more
- There is no awful smell in the house now
- Our mouths don't burn now
- We can catch our breath
- We have a healthier life
- Smoking causes cancer
- We have cleaner teeth
- We sing better
- Smoking causes death
- We don't choke on phlegm
- Our senses of taste and smell are sharper
- Smoking causes jaw cancer
- We feel calmer because of not smoking
- People around us are glad we quit
- Our lungs are clearer
- We breathe better
- Swimming is more fun and easier
- We don't need to drink as much coffee
- Smoking makes things worse
- Our minds were muddled from smoking
- Smoking made us isolate and hide
- We enjoy the extra money
- It took too much time and effort to smoke
- We felt guilt when we smoked if we already had a condition that was made worse by smoking
- Smoking wasted our time
- Smoking can cause a fire
- We don't have all those burns in our clothes
- We are a good example for other family members
- We feel healthy

Donna Richardson is Tobacco Dependence Clinic Coordinator. She has more than 27 years of experience in behavioral health and addiction assessment. A skilled practitioner of individual, couples, family and group therapy, Donna is licensed as a clinical social worker and certified as a drug and alcohol counselor.

Stacey Zelenetz has 13 years of experience with chemical dependency treatment and mental health treatment and comes to the Tobacco Dependence Program from the Behavioral Health Care unit of UMDNJ. Stacey performs individual assessments and provides individual and group counseling services. She is a licensed clinical social worker, a certified drug and alcohol counselor and certified as a tobacco specialist. She is also fluent in Spanish.

“My Story on Smoking”

by an anonymous author

I started smoking in my first year of middle school. Four of us girls went to the movies together. We were in the ladies room and Linda lit up a cigarette. She started blowing smoke rings and playing with the flame on her lighter. Some of us were asking her questions about cigarettes. Everyone tried a cigarette. After I left the movie theatre I felt sick. From that day forth I smoked. When I graduated high school, my Mom let me smoke at home. I'd usually go places with friends who smoked and I would chain smoke. We'd go to movies, bowling, and diners. Loved smoking. My parents gave me money for lunch and I usually spent it on cigarettes. When I reach my thirties I tried to quit but I never was firm in my resolve. One hour, three hours, sometimes a day or two without cigarettes. Also, when I was sick I cut down on my smoking. My Aunt Pearl and two uncles on my Mom's side passed from cancer but I just kept lighting up. My Mom quit smoking when I was in high school. She had cancer. My dad quit around the time I started smoking. I had a few romantic relationships but smoking wasn't much of a problem, since either my boyfriends smoked or put up with it. Except when I met Andy, he didn't like my smoking. And I became self-conscious of how sexually unappealing smoking is. Around this time I quit for nine months. Then I met up with Ruth who smoked. We went to a bar to listen to music. And I started to smoke. My health started to deteriorate when I returned to smoking and also before I was getting a lot of bronchitis, sinus infections, and colds. I also had chest pain and a lung infection. My doctor told me I was getting a light case of emphysema and if I quit it wouldn't get worse.

I had a roommate in the Nineties and I set my bed on fire. My roommate came in my room with water and put the fire out. I was extremely in love with my worst enemy. God must have wanted me to live, and also not put someone else's life in jeopardy.

After the doctor told me about emphysema I tapered off to a pack a day of Carltons. Now it's been 7 years and 3 months as a non-smoker. I didn't do it alone. My friends, Marcel, Mark and Lars were my support. Also, I went a couple of times to a smoking cessation group. Also two

Smokers Anonymous groups. I also had a good book by a doctor who highlighted the dangers of smoking, methods of quitting and techniques to quit. For months I quit and start so many times. Finally, the pain was too much to keep quitting and going back. Gave it up. Exercise helped, eating sweets, too. Visualizations of peaceful imagery helped. The pain finally eased up. I'm glad I quit. Most people wouldn't want to give another person the control cigarettes give them. I'm finally free – I feel reborn.

Social Stigma by Wayne Holland

“Head case, bats in belfry, screw ball, crack pot, nuts, crazy insane, loco in cabasa” – These are all terms that tell me that a lot of people don't understand mental illness and don't want to.

People with physical impairments or disabilities are met with some understanding, but mental illness is met with ignorance and total insensitivity toward people who suffer from it. I've had people threaten to call the police when they find out I have mental illness. I tell them it's not illegal to be mentally ill in America. Even people like me have rights too. In Nazi Germany people suffering from mental illness were shot. But in America I have the right to live.

Part of what I am dealing with is stereotyping but also I am in competition with Hollywood. Just because a person is mentally ill does not mean they are Norman Bates or like some mad scientist trying to take over the world. What it does mean is that people with mental illness have thoughts and emotions that are painful, both psychologically and emotionally. Their painful thoughts and emotions can cripple them and make it hard for them to function like other people. This disability is based on medical scientific findings that tell it is caused by problems with the brain and body chemistry. Medicines are prescribed by real doctors to try to correct the problem as best as possible. There is no cure, only treatment. So when people see someone they think that might be mentally ill, it's a lot nicer and more adult to be understanding and patient with them. I can only handle work on a limited basis because of my disability. People where I live say that it isn't fair because they have to work full time. I can assure people that having mental illness isn't fair either.

My hope is that someday mental illness will be met with the same degree of compassion as other disabilities and illnesses.

FEATURED STORIES

Say no to smoking by Joseph Sarabia

Six months ago something really terrible happened to me. I ended up in the emergency room. What happened is that I had Viral Pneumonia. In the ambulance they had told me that I had a heart attack. As the stretcher rolled down the corridor I had thoughts of how horrible it would be to have my chest carved open and how terrible it would be to have a heart attack and have a plastic one maybe put in me.

The pneumonia itself was bad enough. They had antibiotics placed on my hands and in my arms. I knew very well that all the cases of bronchitis that I had were because of smoking obviously, and knowing was a big incentive. I thought it over for a long time. I was going on with my life without caring enough about myself. I had to look at things with a lot of sincerity, did I want to continue smoking and ruining my health and with what the smoking cessation program that I was attending taught me that I was creating a nightmare of a scenario for my future years to come.

I know that in the smoking cessation classes they showed us pictures of oxygen tubes running down their noses. The horrors of this obsession with the oral fixation were bad enough to make a nightmare out of my future years of life. I want to enjoy my life I thought. I really want to enjoy my life, not to suffer with diseases of all types in my later years when I

am more sensitive than I am now.

I figured that since they would not let me smoke anyway in the hospital and that I was there for three days, I would take advantage of stopping those three days and continue from then on in. Everyday was another battle. It became a pain in the neck trying to fight it everyday but I rode it out and made the best of it. I noticed that lying down in bed was a great way to get through the hard time of it all.

I think I saved my life, and I want you to try to do the same.

How and Why I Quit Smoking by Patty S.

My name is Patty S. I quit smoking cigarettes four and a half years ago and I have been smoke free since.

I was in the dining room at the Club and Dr. Williams came in and asked if there was anyone who was interested in a program for people with mental illness to participate in a study that she was conducting to help people to quit smoking.

I was very interested in the study and signed up to participate. First thing Dr. Williams did was sit down and talk to me about the study. We together decided that the nicotine patch would be the best way to try to quit. I was hesitant at first that I wouldn't be able to finish the study.

The main reason I wanted to quit was because of my health. At the time I had a very bad

cough and I would get dizzy when I smoked my first cigarette in the morning. I was trying to figure out a way to quit because I was making myself sick by smoking.

Dr. Williams walked into my life just when I needed help with my smoking problem — it was like she knew.

I remember the first time I put the patch on. I was so scared that I would get cravings. I had been smoking almost two packs a day. Dr. Williams met with me two times a week. I would get cravings but they would pass after a minute or two. With the patch I didn't have withdrawal at all. I discovered that if I drank a lot of bottled water and had Life Saver candies I felt so much better. I wasn't dizzy anymore and about two weeks later the cough went away. I did the patch for six months and sometimes I would get cravings but the water helped to get rid of all the nasty chemicals (there are about 4,000 that are in cigarettes).

If you ever thought about how to quit smoking, there is a phone number you can call for more information. It's a toll free number.

I never would have been able to quit without the help that Dr. Williams gave me. She is very nice and she made such a difference in my life. I'll always be grateful to her for all her help and understanding.

It's easier to quit than most people think. Three days smoke free — three weeks smoke free with a little bit of willpower you too can quit!

CHOICES Bulletin

"I prayed for all of the people in our group who is struggling with quitting smoking. I prayed for health for you in body, mind, and spirit, physically and emotionally, but most of all I prayed for the Lord's love"



Are you interested in participating in a research study? You may be eligible to earn some extra money for participating in one of our research studies. For more information, call 732-235-9711.

Help us make our newsletter better !!!

We've come a long way in the last year, but we're always looking for new material. You don't have to be a brilliant author, we'll help. Send us a story, an idea, a poem, a riddle, etc. Send an e-mail at Nancy@njchoices.org or szkodna@umdnj.edu.



and fighting stigma. Many consumers and families attended the workshop led by Dr Jill Williams on Tobacco Dependence and Mental Health and stopped by our booth to ask questions and get resources.

LOOK Word Search

By Yasmin Halim

METALS IN CIGARETTES

Can you find these words?

Aluminum Copper

Gold Lead

Magnesium Mercury

Silicon Silver

Titanium Zinc

M	R	A	F	G	L	F	P	M	M
U	D	A	E	L	V	Z	M	S	E
N	N	O	C	I	L	I	S	B	R
I	C	R	E	V	L	I	S	Q	C
M	U	I	S	E	N	G	A	M	U
U	P	N	P	D	L	H	K	J	R
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M	U	I	N	A	T	I	T	G	D



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The Truth About Smoking And Weight Gain

4-7 lbs Less . . .

What a smoker weighs compared with a never smoker

4-7 lbs Less . . .

What an ex-smoker weighs, compared with a never smoker

Less than 10 lbs . . .

How much weight the average smoker gains after quitting smoking

10% Quitters who might gain as much as 30 lbs. after quitting

Negligible. . . . Health risks associated with typical weight gain after quitting smoking

75-100 lbs How much weight a smoker would have to gain to achieve a health risk equivalent to smoking one pack a day

The weight is the same !

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