

# The Nicotine Challenger

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## A View From The Director



As some of you may know, I only arrived in this country (from the UK) about six months ago. Since my arrival in New Jersey, I've been struck by two things. The first is the complex nature of the US healthcare system - so complex that even those who have been working in it for years admit to remaining puzzled by it. It is certainly going to be a challenge to integrate tobacco dependence treatment into such a complex system. The other thing which has impressed me is the rapid progress which is being made to tackle tobacco dependence in New Jersey. Over the past few months we have seen the launch of the free telephone counseling and advice service 1-866-NJ STOPS, the launch of the internet site designed to help New Jersey smokers quit, [www.nj.quitnet.com](http://www.nj.quitnet.com), and the training and setting up of nine specialist tobacco dependence clinics to provide face-to-face treatment. The many people around the state who have worked for these developments for years should feel proud that their hard work is coming to fruition and that some of the funds from the Master Settlement Agreement are being used to help existing smokers to quit.

Of course this is just the beginning of New Jersey's comprehensive tobacco control program! The youth-led anti-tobacco movement REBEL was recently launched, there are plans to set up another six treatment clinics, and later in the year we will see the implementation of the provisions in the licensure standards for residential addiction services which require entirely smoke-free treatment for addictions. These are indeed busy and challenging times for tobacco control in New Jersey.

The Tobacco Dependence Program at UMDNJ-School of Public Health is a part of the comprehensive program being set up by New Jersey with funds from the Master Settlement Agreement. The Tobacco Dependence Program is dedicated to reducing the harm to health caused by tobacco use and we aim to do this through education, treatment, research and advocacy. We have increased the size of the Nicotine Challenger in order to help keep you informed of the many developments that are taking place. On April 23rd we held a conference on "Young People and Tobacco" which outlined current trends in youth tobacco use in New Jersey as well as ways in which individual providers can implement treatment strategies for young people. We will also hold our annual conference, "Addressing Tobacco Dependence In The New Millennium: State Of The Art For Clinicians," on June 7th. Among the invited speakers are Scott Leischow Ph.D., Director of Tobacco Control at the National Cancer Institute and our own Professor John Slade. We hope that this will provide an opportunity for you to learn more about developments in treatment for tobacco dependence.

Warm Regards,  
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## CHAMPION VS. TOBACCO SUSAN GOLDMAN



Susan Goldman, Director of Prevention Services, Division of Addiction Services at the NJ Department of Health and Senior Services, has enjoyed an impressive public health career for close to 24 years. Her evolution to a passionate tobacco control advocate is the story that makes her this issue's Champion vs. Tobacco.

In the 1980s, while working in the area of people with disabilities, and later, mothers and children, Susan Goldman began to appreciate the importance of prevention in both human and health costs. "So much money could be freed for positive things we need as a society if we just could prevent problems," Ms. Goldman remarked.

A smoker since her college days, when she began smoking for weight control, Ms. Goldman began to experience health consequences in the mid-80s. Then, in an effort to enforce the DOH "no smoking at your desk" policy, John Slade made a presentation which got her attention, but not in a very positive way. "I had a right to smoke!" she thought. "Meanwhile I was coughing in the morning and grabbing a cigarette first thing. I was unable to get through the day without a cigarette every two hours." Simultaneously, her husband, also a smoker, discovered he had cardiac damage. Suddenly, the problems caused by smoking became much more personal—it was not theoretical any longer.

Not everyone who stops smoking becomes a tobacco control advocate, but through her work in Maternal and Child Health, as the effects of smoking in mothers on their children became more apparent to her, Susan Goldman did. "My real passion for tobacco control came in 1995, when my husband was diagnosed with lung cancer," she remembered. "It stopped me absolutely cold and the passion of why we must control tobacco entered my life."

Her husband passed away from lung cancer in 1996 and Susan Goldman's passion as a tobacco-control advocate has grown continually since. "The more I talk to people who are affected, whether from heart disease, pulmonary disease or cancer, the more I do my job with compassion," she said.

Today, New Jersey is putting together a comprehensive, sophisticated and integrated program of tobacco control. The task is to help communities understand the impact of tobacco and how it negatively affects them, while increasing awareness of the cost both individually and collectively. Susan Goldman's life and professional experience can only add to the long-term goal of changing social norms.

