

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Tobacco Use: Risks and Rates

by Philip McCabe, CSW, CAS and Mia Zimmermann, MPH

Evidence has shown that the rates of tobacco use among gays exceed those of the general population. A report released in December 1999 by the *American Journal of Public Health* showed that 40% of gay men smoke as compared to 25.7% of men in the general US population. Few studies have focused on lesbians, although increased rates of use are noted in that population as well.

A report released by then-U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher on women and smoking found that women now account for 39% of all smoking-caused deaths and that lung cancer has surpassed breast cancer as the leading cause of female cancer death in the United States. This was the first Surgeon General's report on women and smoking that mentioned lesbians. "Data on current smoking among lesbians and bisexual women are limited and have been based on convenience samples, which limits generalizability," the report stated. "The few existing studies strongly suggest that prevalence of smoking is higher than in the general population." The report also noted that major tobacco brands have targeted gays in their advertising since the early 1990s.

Several factors appear to contribute to increased rates of smoking among LGBT, including higher stress levels, bars' role as a primary social outlet, increased incidence of substance use, reduced access to health care, and targeted marketing efforts by the tobacco industry. LGBT youth may be especially vulnerable to tobacco use because of higher levels of stress related to identity and sexual exploration; increased feelings of being an outsider; less support from family, friends, and community; higher levels of emotional, psychological, and other life stress (thus the appeal of products that purport to provide tension reduction); and exposure to adult LGBT environments that sup-

port smoking. (American Legacy LGBT Priority Populations Report, 2001).

Two school-based surveys in Massachusetts showed that between 1993 and 1995, smoking rates among LGBT youth increased by 13% (from 42% to 55%), while smoking rates in heterosexuals declined from 42% to 35%.

In addition to tobacco dependence, there is also concern about increased exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) among LGBT. Considering the frequency of exposure from partners, friends, workplace smoking and often increased socialization within the bar culture, LGBT individuals seem to be at continued risk of the harmful effects of ETS.

The Pride Center of New Jersey Inc., in collaboration with the UMDNJ/SPH Tobacco Dependence Program, will be offering assistance for LGBT individuals who want to quit smoking. A pilot program is being developed to provide outreach and support that is LGBT-affirmative and in compliance with current best practices. The group will be held in New Brunswick at the Pride Center.

For information about the group, or for assistance, training or consultation about providing tobacco dependence treatment to LGBT smokers, please contact Philip T. McCabe at 732-235-8229.



## Tobacco Dependence Treatment at Your Fingertips!

by Patricia Repetto, MEd

The Tobacco Dependence Program is proud to announce a more complete and user-friendly version of our website: [www.tobaccoprogram.org](http://www.tobaccoprogram.org). Whether you are a tobacco dependence treatment professional, a clinician looking to learn more about tobacco dependence treatment, a smoker looking for help in quitting smoking or a student looking for information for a research paper, this website is your answer for accessing the most up-to-date and comprehensive information on tobacco dependence treatment in New Jersey and beyond. If you want to review the latest edition of our Nicotine Challenger newsletter, or want to register for any one of our upcoming training and education events, it is all here. Some of the exciting components of the new website are highlighted below:

**NJ STOP! Magazine** is available for online reading or downloading just by clicking on the icon.

For up-to-the-minute news about tobacco control, click on **Today's Tobacco News**. Thanks to Join Together, a project of the Boston University School of Public Health, these major tobacco-related news stories are updated daily.



If you are looking for the closest treatment center in NJ, simply click on **New Jersey Quit Centers** under Treatment. You will find a detailed map that allows you to click onto the county of your choice. You will then be given the location and address of the quit center in that county.

If you would like to register for any one of our educational symposiums, one-day clinician tobacco treatment trainings or our 8-day tobacco treatment specialist trainings, simply click onto **Training** under **Training and Consultation** and you'll be able to link directly to the registration forms for any of these educational events.

If you are in need of **educational materials** for your clients, students, or patients, click on the "Education" tab and you'll find an overview of materials including brochures, training manuals, videos, and posters. You'll be able to download an **order form** for any of these materials so that you can order what you need today!

If you are looking for factual information pertaining to tobacco, consult the **Tobacco Reference Guide** under the **Education** tab. The answer to any of your questions on tobacco can be found here!