

The Nicotine Challenger

Summer 2007

This issue: **New Impressions**

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A View From The Director

by *Jonathan Foulds, PhD*

The first year anniversary of implementation of New Jersey's historic smoke-free air legislation passed recently and New Jersey's legislators deserve further congratulations for passing another piece of legislation that will limit the harm from cigarettes. On May 4th, legislation requiring all cigarettes sold in New Jersey to have a reduced ignition propensity was signed into law. The law will come into force on June 1, 2008. So what are "reduced ignition propensity" (RIP) cigarettes, you might ask? These are cigarettes that have a reduced propensity to burn when left unattended. The most common technology used by cigarette manufacturers is to wrap cigarettes with two or three thin bands of less-porous paper that act as "speed bumps" to slow down a burning cigarette. If one of these cigarettes is left unattended, the burning tobacco will reach one of these speed bumps and self-extinguish. Although any lit material can cause a fire, these cigarettes are significantly less likely to cause a fire if less unattended, and cigarettes are the single biggest cause of deaths in house-fires (around 800 people per year, with more than double that figure being injured).

So having raised cigarette taxes to be among the highest in the nation, passed smoke-free air legislation, raised the age-of-sale for tobacco to 19, and now required that all cigarettes sold in New Jersey be RIP, what should be the next priority? In my view, the most pressing need is for legislation requiring all health insurance policies active in New Jersey to adequately cover evidence-based tobacco dependence treatment. If you have high cholesterol, your doctor can treat it and your insurance will probably cover it. If you are at risk of breast cancer, then your health insurance will probably cover screening, and if you have hypertension your insurance will likely cover the treatment. But if you are an addicted smoker in New Jersey and you want to get the help you need to quit, you are probably out of luck in terms of getting it covered by your insurance. We even have the strange situation whereby the smoking cessation medicine called bupropion will likely be covered as "Welbutrin," which is the brand name for the drug to treat depression, but not as "Zyban," the name for the same drug marketed for smoking cessation. And if you want your counseling or group therapy to be covered, you are even more likely to be disappointed. Now you might ask whether legislation is really necessary... can't we just rely on employers to ask for such coverage and insurers to offer it because it's the most cost-effective healthcare intervention after childhood immunizations? I'm afraid not. Here in New Jersey smokers now have every reason to want to quit and thousands are trying every year. But many are finding that this addiction is a tough nut to crack and would benefit from treatment from their healthcare provider. Proven treatments are available, but underutilized because they are not covered by many insurance policies. Many other states (from Minnesota to New Mexico) have good insurance coverage for tobacco treatment. It's time to do the right thing and mandate health insurance coverage for tobacco treatment services.

For more information on this topic visit:

<http://www.tobaccoprogram.org/cftfkinsurance.htm>

Jonathan Foulds PhD, Director

UMDNJ-SPH-Tobacco Dependence Program expands to Newark

by *Heather Jordan, MPH, CHES*

On January 2, 2007, the Tobacco Dependence Program, at the UMDNJ-School of Public Health (SPH) expanded its services to Newark, NJ. On that day, the Tobacco Dependence Clinic-Newark (Newark Clinic) opened its doors to provide smoking cessation services to individuals living, working, worshipping, and seeking healthcare in the Newark area. Dr. Jonathan Foulds, director of the Tobacco Dependence Program at the SPH states, "This new service for smokers will build upon the success of our UMDNJ-SPH-Tobacco Dependence Clinic at New Brunswick, which has now treated almost 3,000 smokers and is one of the leading tobacco treatment centers in the country."

The Newark Clinic is located on the 7th floor in the Stanley S. Bergen Building at 65 Bergen Street in Newark, NJ. Neal Richard (Rick) Boyd, EdD, MSPH, professor and associate dean of the SPH-Newark Campus, is the director of the Newark Clinic. Heather Jordan, MPH, CHES, was hired in October, 2006 as a

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KUDOS!

Both Rick Boyd and Heather Jordan would like to thank Daniela G. Accurso, MPH for her dedication to the Tobacco Dependence Clinic-Newark during her internship period (January-May, 2007). Ms. Accurso's internship experience was a required component of her NYU MPH program. During Ms. Accurso's time with the Newark Clinic, she developed a packet of materials designed to assist pregnant smokers move through the Stages of Change to the point of setting a quit date and maintaining abstinence during their pregnancy and in the postpartum period; assisted with community outreach activities, including attending the New Jersey Dental School's Annual Oral Cancer Screening Day; and conducted client follow-up activities; among many other vital tasks.

We wish Daniela great success in her future public health endeavors!

**CONGRATUALIONS AND GOOD LUCK,
DANIELA!**

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The **Tobacco Dependence Program** is dedicated to reducing the harm to health caused by tobacco use. We do this through education, treatment, research and advocacy.

The **Tobacco Dependence Program**, UMDNJ-School of Public Health, helps programs, organizations and clinicians deal with tobacco issues and nicotine dependence.

Products and services include:

- ◆ consultation
- ◆ education and training
- ◆ policy & program development
- ◆ treatment planning
- ◆ staff recovery workshops
- ◆ tobacco dependence treatment



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program development specialist and charged with the development and implementation of the Newark Clinic. In January 2007, she was named clinic coordinator.

The mission of the Newark Clinic is to provide comprehensive, science-based smoking cessation services through a commitment to research, practice, education, collaboration, and innovation to individuals seeking help to kick their tobacco habit. Dr. Rick Boyd comments, "Many people who try to quit smoking fail to do so because they believe the myth that going 'cold turkey' is the only way to succeed. In reality, the best way to quit smoking is a combination of counseling, nicotine replacement and some of the new medications for smoking cessation. Studies have shown that this combination can actually quadruple a smoker's chances of quitting for good."

Clinic staff work with clients to develop tailored quit plans to fit their personal needs. Currently, clients are offered the opportunity to attend free new patient assessments, free one-to-one follow-up appointments, and to join a smoking cessation group which is also free. The Newark Clinic offers expertise on available medication therapies to help manage nicotine withdrawal symptoms during the quit process. The Newark Clinic offers boxes of nicotine patches and nicotine gum at a reduced rate and a clinician is available to write prescriptions for medicines that are not available over-the-counter.

Currently, the Newark Clinic continues to reach out to healthcare organizations and providers, community organization, churches, and academic institutions, among others, to promote the above-mentioned services. Most notably, many individuals are both eager to hear about how the Newark Clinic can help with quit attempts and are surprised when they are told that the services are indeed free. The author notes, "Promoting our free services is of paramount importance because many of the clients the Newark Clinic serves do not have private health insurance, thus they are not in a position to pay for treatment out of pocket. By removing this barrier to treatment, we hope to reach the members of the community that most need our help."

Individuals who would like help to kick their tobacco use should call 973-972-041 or email TobaccoClinicNewark@umdnj.edu to set-up a free new patient assessment. Healthcare providers are also welcomed to refer consenting patients via a fax referral form that can be obtained by calling or emailing the Newark Clinic.