

The Nicotine Challenger

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Something Old, Something New

As of October 1998, the *Addressing Tobacco...* project grant began operating under the auspices of UMDNJ-School of Public Health. This change was brought about when the project director, Dr. John Slade, resigned from his position at St. Peter's Medical Center to become director of The Addictions Program at the newly organized School of Public Health of New Jersey. The NJ Department of Health grant which supports the *Addressing Tobacco...* project was, at that time, transferred to this new program and is now administered by UMDNJ. Staying the same, however, was the location of the project at New Street in New Brunswick, and the spectrum of services provided by the agency. Phone and fax numbers also remained the same, although checks for trainings and products are now made out to *Addressing Tobacco-UMDNJ*. The transition has brought many positive changes, and we're proud to be associated with the new School of Public Health, Addictions Program.

Consultants Join Addressing Tobacco... project Training Roster

We are happy to announce the addition of three new trainers at the *Addressing Tobacco...* project. James and Karen Mell, and Abby Hoffman have been leading full-day workshops since December in various counties throughout the state, and have assisted project staff with in-services and continuing education events.

Abby Hoffman, as many of our readers know, was the first coordinator at *Addressing Tobacco* when the project began in 1991. Since leaving the project in 1995, Abby has pursued a variety of activities outside the addictions field, but agreed to return as a trainer for several of the events scheduled for this winter and spring.

James and Karen Mell are the founders of Step Ahead, Inc. which provides counseling for the chemically addicted and their families, and educational presentations for the community. Jim and Karen provide help for nicotine dependence at their agency, and have had experience working in a tobacco-free addictions treatment setting.

Champion vs. Tobacco

Richard D. Hurt, M.D.

Dr. Richard Hurt is the Director of the Nicotine Dependence Center at the Mayo Clinic and Professor of Medicine at the Mayo Medical School in Rochester, MN. Dr. Hurt and his colleagues developed a treatment program for nicotine dependence based on behavioral, addictions, and pharmacologic treatments and relapse prevention. Dr. Hurt shared his personal battle with nicotine addiction.

"I started smoking in college, after I stopped playing basketball. I was a heavy smoker almost from the very beginning. I smoked right through the rest of college, medical school, internship, and my two years in the Army."

In 1973, Dr. Hurt came to the Mayo Clinic as a Fellow in internal medicine. When his wife enrolled them both in a smokers' clinic, he was doubtful. "I had tried to stop smoking dozens of times before but had been variably successful, sometimes as long as thirty minutes, sometimes for half a day or so, but never for very long," he remembers. But he was able to stop smoking. "I quit on Saturday, November 22, 1975 at 3:30 in the afternoon. It was the hardest thing I ever did," he recalls.

As part of his duties as a staff member at Mayo, Dr. Hurt was responsible for the smoker's clinic. "We began to incorporate into the smoker's clinic the philosophy of addiction, of nicotine dependence, which was not really done very much at that time," Dr. Hurt said. "The first Surgeon General's report about nicotine addiction wasn't published until 1988, so we were about ten years ahead of the field."

The frustrating experience of working with patients in life-threatening circum-

stances due to their smoking and who could not stop, led Dr. Hurt to organize a committee to develop a program to address nicotine addiction at the Mayo Clinic.

Since the Mayo Nicotine Dependence Center opened its doors in April, 1988, more than 17,000 patients have been treated—the largest clinical experience in the world. Within a few months of opening, the Center began its first research project—a nicotine patch project. Since that time, the Center has "probably done thirty-five or more clinical trials, averaged four or five thousand research subjects over the ensuing years and has developed a very active, very large research program," Dr. Hurt said.

In addition, an educational program was developed. Among other issues, the program focuses on the how to create a nicotine treatment program in an existing alcohol and drug treatment program. There are also training programs for medical residents, fellows in addictive disorders, and post-doctoral fellows.

Dr. Hurt is widely published on tobacco issues including the treatment of nicotine dependence in the context of other addictions.

"It's wrong to blame the user. Smokers aren't bad people. They're good people who are dependent on a bad substance," he says. "Smokers need support and effective tools to break that dependence. Recovery is a life-long process."



Brochures for **A Clinical Program for Treating Nicotine Dependence**, a full day *Addressing Tobacco...* project presentation by Dr. Hurt on April 21, were mailed to NJ, NY and PA individuals and programs in March.