

The Nicotine Challenger

Winter 2005

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A View From The Director

At the beginning of a new year it is customary to set goals for the year ahead, so I've selected my four goals for tobacco and health in 2005- two focusing on New Jersey and two at the national level.

1 Protect New Jersey Workers From Tobacco Smoke Pollution New Jersey is now almost surrounded by Northeastern states that have passed comprehensive state-wide legislation protecting workers and the public from having to inhale tobacco smoke pollution in public places. A recent study found that the air in New Jersey bars contains nine times greater levels of toxic respirable particles compared with bars in near-by New York. The evidence for the serious health effects of exposure to tobacco smoke pollution has mounted in the past couple of years as has the evidence that business actually grows in bars and restaurants when they go smoke-free.

More information on this issue, including copies of the most recent scientific reports, are available from our website homepage at www.tobaccoprogram.org.

2 Fund Comprehensive Tobacco Control in New Jersey I have written on this issue on numerous occasions in this column. The argument remains the same and makes even more sense in tight budget times, because reducing tobacco consumption reduces healthcare costs in addition to improving health. New Jersey's Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program is an effective and successful program and deserves to be funded at least at the minimum levels recommended by the CDC in 1999 (\$45m per year). Both adult and youth cigarette smoking prevalence have fallen by 15% in the past few years in New Jersey, and the latest national survey (2003) found that New Jersey now has the 5th lowest daily smoking prevalence in the country (14%). With clean air legislation and proper funding for tobacco control, New Jersey could lead the country in reducing smoking and improving health.

3 Implement Federal Regulation of Tobacco Products In 2004, like ten years earlier, there was a real possibility of legislation being passed that would grant the US Food and Drug Administration the authority to regulate tobacco products. Unfortunately, this opportunity was not taken, but the need remains. It is a bizarre anomaly that the only consumer product that kills when used as intended can be sold with very little restriction, and with very little government control over the harmfulness or addictiveness of the product. Rational federal regulation would enhance health warnings, reduce toxin delivery, restrict marketing (particularly to young people), ban false or misleading claims, and do all this without limiting the rights of individuals or groups to legal redress for harms caused by current or previous tobacco products.

4 Ratification of the W.H.O. Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (FCTC) The FCTC is the World Health Organization's first international public health treaty focusing on reducing the harm to health from tobacco and will enter into force on February 27, 2005. It contains a host of provisions that are effective in reducing the health effects of tobacco – including bans on deceptive marketing and restricting smoking in workplaces. It has been signed by over 167 countries (including the US) and ratified by over 48 countries (including Australia, Canada and the UK, but not the US). The FCTC is only legally binding in countries that choose to ratify. So far the United States has not been inclined to ratify the FCTC but it would be an enormous boost to global public health if this treaty became law in the United States.

I like to have a mix of goals for the year – some clearly achievable, some very challenging – just to keep life interesting. I wish you a happy and healthy 2005 and hope your goals come true.

*Jonathan Foulds PhD
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UMDNJ Tobacco Dependence Program in the News! *by Patricia Repetto, M.Ed.*

If you are a frequent viewer of the NBC Today Show or a subscriber to the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), you might have seen reference made to the Tobacco Dependence Program in the past few months. As the issue of quitting smoking continues to go mainstream and be highlighted more often in the media, the UMDNJ-Tobacco Dependence Program (TDP) has been called upon for its advice on issues related to the treatment of tobacco dependence.

The TDP on The TODAY Show

In October of this past year, The Today Show produced a show focusing on quitting issues unique to women and reached out to the TDP for assistance in identifying women who were currently enrolled in our clinic or had successfully quit smoking as a result of receiving treatment in our clinic. The show featured two of our clients who spoke very highly of the services that they received at our clinic. The show aired on October 30th and also featured Cheryl Heaton of the American Legacy Foundation as well as Richard Hurt of the Mayo Clinic. To view a video clip from the show, please visit the website www.americanlegacy.org.



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