

Attention Tobacco Treatment Providers! A New Organization Exists to Support Tobacco Treatment!

by Patricia Repetto, M.Ed.

A new national organization has been formed to promote and increase access to evidence-based tobacco treatment for tobacco users. The Association for the Treatment of Tobacco Use and Dependence (ATTUD) is a voluntary coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to the effective treatment of tobacco use and dependence. ATTUD hopes to fill the need for a reliable and respected resource of evidence-based treatment for providers of tobacco dependence treatment.

Background:

ATTUD was formed in response to the overwhelming need for providers of tobacco dependence treatment to exchange information on best practices, innovations in treatment and gaps in the empirical base of tobacco treatment. While the PHS Guidelines for the Treatment of Tobacco Use and Dependence were welcomed as a great starting point to addressing consistent and evidence-based approaches in dealing with nicotine addiction. Research questions continue to be tested and important advances made that can benefit tobacco treatment providers.

What started as a dialogue between researchers and providers in the field of tobacco treatment has grown to a formal organization consisting of a wide array of members representing academic/research settings, medical institutions, insurers, and community-based programs. ATTUD was developed by a 24-member planning committee and is led by a 10-member board of directors. ATTUD will be holding its first inaugural meeting at the National Conference on Tobacco or Health on December 13th, 2003. ATTUD is supported



entirely on membership fees and the voluntary efforts of its members. Future plans include incorporating as a 501-C-3 and pursuing grant related funding.

Closing the Gap/Meeting the Need:

ATTUD's primary goal is to serve as a reliable and respected resource of evidence-based tobacco use and dependence treatment for the health care community, regulatory agencies, private foundations, and providers of tobacco treatment training, with the ultimate goal of assisting tobacco users. ATTUD will provide a forum for tobacco treatment providers to engage in discussion regarding issues such as effective treatment interventions, reimbursement for the treatment of nicotine addiction as well as training and certification issues. ATTUD will do this via the creation of a member-only listserv, an annual meeting dedicated to unique tobacco treatment issues, and possibly a journal. In addition, ATTUD will work to establish standards for core competencies in the training and credentialing of tobacco treatment specialists and to serve as an advocate and voice for tobacco users to promote the awareness and availability of effective tobacco treatments.

How to Join:

Membership to ATTUD is open to any individual who is currently active or has been historically active in the treatment of tobacco use and dependence. An annual \$75 membership fee entitles you to receive updates/newsletter, free attendance at annual meetings, summaries of research outcomes, advice and policy statements, access to a list-serve, active participation in the organization and full voting rights. An annual student membership of \$35 is available for students who can provide proof of student status. A membership application is available and can be downloaded at www.tobaccoprogram.org.



Expanded Resources for Addiction Treatment Providers

By Martha Dwyer, MA, CADC

New Jersey's Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) has recently expanded the resources available to addiction treatment providers in New Jersey in meeting their tobacco dependence treatment needs.

Addiction treatment providers can now work with their local Quitcenter to enhance existing tobacco dependence treatment. This collaboration will broaden the range of services in terms of both level of treatment intensity and types of interventions tailored to patients' motivation to address their tobacco use (Stage of Readiness for Change). Quitcenter staff will support providers in a variety of ways depending on the program's treatment needs. Services for patients might include individual counseling for patients, tobacco-specific psycho-educational groups or work with specific subpopulations, such as patients using NRT or those highly motivated patients who are ready to develop a quit plan. Quitcenters will also be able to provide their regular services at the addiction treatment site for tobacco dependent staff, increasing staff access to treatment.

In addition to enhancing tobacco dependence treatment offered by addiction providers, this collaborative effort will strengthen the continuum of care for tobacco dependent patients. Clients will become familiar with quitcenter staff and services while in treatment for chemical dependence. This in turn, increases the likelihood of individuals reaching out to a quitcenter following discharge.

The DHSS has also expanded the availability of free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) to include tobacco dependent staff of qualified residential addiction treatment programs. This resource builds on an initiative instituted in late 2001 when free NRT, both patch and gum, was made available to clients of residential programs to ease the discomfort of withdrawal and support client motivation to quit. The Tobacco Dependence Program will continue to serve as the distribution point for NRT to residential programs and will monitor both staff and client NRT usage.

