



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

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COMMISSIONER

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May 28, 2013

Dear Colleague,

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease, killing more than 1,200 Americans each day. For every person who dies from tobacco use, another 20 suffer from one or more serious smoking-related illnesses. Reducing smoking is one proven way we can help people live longer, healthier lives. In April 2013, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched the second Tips from Former Smokers national tobacco education campaign (Tips 2013) to raise awareness about the suffering caused by smoking and secondhand smoke exposure and to encourage smokers to quit.

As a health care provider, you know smoking has a negative impact on your patient's health. Smoking-related illnesses include: cancer of the lungs, stomach, mouth, esophagus, pancreas, and kidneys; heart disease; and bronchitis, emphysema, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. The good news is that over 70% of tobacco users visit a health care provider each year. You have a unique opportunity to motivate your patients to quit and improve the chances that they will be successful.

During the Tips 2013 campaign, there will be an initiative referred to as "Talk With Your Doctor". CDC, in partnership with a number of national physician groups, will launch "Talk with Your Doctor" mid-way through the Tips campaign with a national press event scheduled on May 22nd. CDC will highlight the "Talk with Your Doctor" effort by tagging a portion of the ad buy with the tagline: "You Can Quit. Talk with Your Doctor for Help." Those ads will air between May 27th and June 2nd. The "Talk with Your Doctor" call to action is expected to continue through outreach and other media activities. This will provide a great opportunity for you to ask your patients about their tobacco use and encourage them to make a quit attempt. To maximize this opportunity, I am reaching out to you to ask that you use your influence as a health care provider to help your patients quit smoking.

For these reasons, we at the Department of State Health Services are inviting you to join us along with CDC, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and American College of Physicians. We can work together to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke and to motivate smokers to quit.

Since the "Talk with your Doctor" initiative launched on May 22, you now have access to a variety of materials including waiting room posters that you and your health care team can download from: www.cdc.gov/tips. A looped video for use in clinic waiting rooms may be downloaded from www.plowsharegroup.com/cdctips. At the same time, your patients will be now be seeing Tips ads in every television market in the United States. During the campaign last year, overall quitline call volume to 1-800-QUIT NOW more than doubled, and visits to the Web site (www.smokefree.gov) increased by more than five times during the same 12-week period in 2011.

You see the devastation that tobacco brings to your patients every day. You know tobacco use drastically increases the health care burden from chronic diseases. Let's join together in combating the burden.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Lakey MD". The signature is fluid and cursive.

David L. Lakey, M.D.
Commissioner