



NEWS RELEASE

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FREE MEDICATION AVAILABLE TO HELP PEOPLE QUIT SMOKING

Once again, the Health Unit is looking for smokers who may be eligible to participate in the *Stop on the Road* workshops which will be taking place in North Bay on June 24, 2010. Eligible participants for *Stop on the Road* will receive 5 weeks of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) free of charge. The STOP (Smoking Treatment for Ontario Patients) Program, is an initiative that aims to reduce tobacco smoking in the province by increasing the use of effective smoking cessation medication and other resources. *Stop on the Road* is made possible by a partnership between the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and the Ministry of Health Promotion, and is administered locally through the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit.

While it has been shown that attempts to quit smoking are more successful when done with the help of counseling and a nicotine replacement medication, many people do not use this resource, partially due to cost. The STOP program diminishes this cost barrier by distributing nicotine replacement therapy aids free of charge to Ontario residents whose progress will be monitored periodically. In addition, STOP will offer educational material to encourage the program participants to make broader changes that can improve their health even more, because often smoking does not occur in isolation, but rather accompanies other risk factors for disease, such as poor nutrition and lack of physical activity.

Smokers who wish to participate in this program can find out if they qualify and register by contacting Lydia Weiskopf-Tran at the Health Unit at (705) 474-1400 Ext. 2401 or 1-800-563-2808 Ext. 2401.

Quote

“If people are able to quit sooner, they may be able to prevent the onset of serious illnesses brought on by smoking,” said Dr. Peter Selby, Clinical Director of Addiction Programs, CAMH and Principal Investigator of the STOP Study. “This project will allow us to help people along in the process and monitor which quitting methods are most effective. This way, we will be able to better treat people in the future,” he said.

"Smokers who are ready to quit smoking frequently need support, and we are ensuring that they have access to effective support to help them along the way. That is why the McGuinty government has made unprecedented investments to improve access to smoking cessation resources for Ontarians who are ready to quit," says Minister of Health Promotion Margaret Best.

"This is a good program and an excellent opportunity for people to quit smoking." said Lydia Weiskopf-Tran, Community Health Promoter, North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit. "We are happy to partner with CAMH and the Ministry of Health Promotion to make this unique opportunity available to the people in our district."

Quick Facts

- Smoking is the largest preventable cause of disease in Ontario and represents a significant burden on Ontario's health care system, totaling \$1.6 billion every year.
- Approximately 17% of Ontarians smoke, meaning 1.7 million people in this province may potentially develop serious illness as a direct result of their dependence on tobacco.
- The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) is Canada's leading addiction and mental health teaching hospital. Integrating clinical care, scientific research, education, policy development and health promotion, CAMH transforms the lives of people impacted by mental health and addiction issues.

- 30 -

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