

Health Bulletin



How Doctors Help Patients Quit Smoking

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American Legacy Foundation

(NAPSA)—A few words from the doctor may be surprisingly effective in helping patients to quit smoking, recent research suggests.

Doctors who advise their patients to quit smoking can increase success rates by as much as 30 percent, says a report by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published in 2000.

That's why new programs are being funded to increase the resources available to medical professionals to help them educate their patients about the importance of quitting.

Because Americans below the poverty line are 40 percent more likely to smoke than those at or above the poverty line, programs created by the American Legacy Foundation focus on low-income communities that have a greater need for such intervention.

Research shows that those with low income are not only more likely to smoke but are less likely to quit and less likely to have access to the tools and information that can help them quit.

Health care providers are among the most important sources of information for Americans on health issues and have the potential to make a big difference in efforts to reduce smoking and tobacco use.

At least 70 percent of smokers see a physician each year—and that's a good opportunity for them to learn more about the dangers of tobacco. Each year, approximately 440,000 Americans die from tobacco-related diseases such as heart disease, cancers, emphysema and stroke.



NEW PROGRAMS are helping doctors speak to their patients about quitting smoking.

In Newark, New Jersey, the foundation identifies and funds programs that are culturally sensitive. For example, a program in the emergency department at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center has developed a model for treating tobacco use in emergency departments where many urban residents receive their primary health care. So far, the program has helped 900 people quit smoking.

In Lansing, Michigan, the Ingham County Health Department has developed relationships with four neighborhood health centers to provide cessation services to low-income and uninsured individuals.

In New Mexico, Community Voices New Mexico uses lay health advisors in the Hispanic community to discuss smoking cessation in a culturally sensitive way.

The efforts of these and other programs have touched the lives of thousands of Americans. For more information, visit www.americanlegacy.org.