

April 01, 2013

Vermont Quit Partners Guide People Away from Smoking

One of the most noticeable changes Sarah Cosgrove sees in people who quit smoking is that their complexion improves from a ghostly pallor to a healthy pink. Cosgrove, a tobacco treatment specialist and respiratory therapist for the Rutland Regional Medical Center Community Health Team, has worked as a Vermont Quit Partner for the past six years.

“Helping people to quit smoking is meaningful work, and most smokers want to quit,” said Cosgrove, who is one of 50 quit partners and 15 community health teams statewide. “You see how the behavioral change brings people confidence and affects how they stand and hold themselves because it directly impacts their overall happiness.”

The Vermont Department of Health is airing a Quit Partners television and internet ad featuring Cosgrove and Rose Sheehan from St. Johnsbury beginning on April 8. Tips are offered to smokers that provide alternatives to lighting up, such as delaying your smoke, drinking water, breathing deeply, and doing something else.

Every year, approximately 17 percent of deaths in Vermont are due to smoking-related diseases.

Beginning April 1, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is airing its own series of ads that show people who are living with the effects of smoking-related diseases. The newest ads in the “Tips from Former Smokers” campaign tell the stories of lives changed forever due to their smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke. The new ads will air through June 23.

The ads call attention to smoking-related health conditions— including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or COPD, more severe adult asthma, and complications from diabetes, such as blindness, kidney failure, heart disease, and amputation—and candidly describe the losses from smoking and the gains from quitting.

Cosgrove said smokers who take time to weigh the pros and cons of smoking usually quit.

“Reasons why people continue to smoke give us great insight on where we need to work. I always tell people, ‘Why stay the same?’ My goal is to change their entire thought process.”

Smokers are encouraged to call 1-800-QUIT NOW, a toll-free number to access free quit support across the country.

For more information about Vermont Quit Partners visit: <http://www.vtquitnetwork.org>, and to see the new advertisement on Youtube visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?vxX3U10eVe9M>

Tobacco is still the number one cause of preventable death. Reducing the prevalence of smoking, and increasing the percentage of smokers who attempt to quit are goals of Healthy Vermonters 2020, the population health indicators and goals that will guide the work of public health for the decade.

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Source: Department of Health

Last Updated at: April 01, 2013 13:58:45