



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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PHIL BREDESEN
GOVERNOR

SUSAN R. COOPER, MSN, RN
COMMISSIONER

October 1, 2007

Dear Colleagues:

Today, October 1, 2007, is a historic date for Tennesseans. This is the day that the Non-Smoker's Protection Act goes into effect and all enclosed public places become smoke-free. I believe that this will motivate many of your patients to quit using tobacco. In Tennessee, there are more than one million adult smokers, many of whom have tried to quit but have failed. Tennessee has the 3rd highest smoking rate in the nation.

As a healthcare provider, you know the impact that tobacco has on one's health. It leads to many diseases such as asthma, emphysema, heart disease, lung cancer, and sudden infant death syndrome.

You are one of the most important sources of information for your patients and their families on health issues and risks. Smokers need help to quit, but less than half of smokers who were advised to quit were given tools to assist them. You have the ability to aid your patients in reducing smoking and tobacco use.

Today is the day that we should all start with a clean health slate.

- The Tennessee Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUITNOW is a free tool to assist your patients. Any Tennessean can utilize this service and will be provided with a personal quit coach and resources for quitting.
- To help you, a quick two page reference for tobacco dependence staging, cessation counseling, and medications is available on the Quitline site at <http://health.state.tn.us/tobaccoquitline.htm>. Select menu item: Resources for Healthcare Professionals, Healthcare Providers Guide.
- Some Tennessee insurance carriers will cover cessation treatments.
- If you are in a specialty practice and do not offer cessation services, please refer your patients to their primary care provider or the local health department for cessation management.

I know that by working together, we can combat the devastating effects of tobacco use on our citizens. Please join me in helping to make this a smoke-free Tennessee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan R. Cooper MSN, RN".

Susan R. Cooper MSN, RN
Commissioner