

State of **New York**  
Department of **Health news**

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GOVERNOR

Richard F. Daines, M.D.  
COMMISSIONER

**STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT AD CAMPAIGN URGES  
HUDSON VALLEY DOCTORS:  
“DON’T BE SILENT ABOUT SMOKING”**

*Doctors Can Do More To Help Patients Quit Smoking*

**Elmsford, N.Y. (Feb. 1, 2008)** - The New York State Department of Health today unveiled its “Don’t Be Silent About Smoking” ad campaign, urging health care providers [statewide, including those in](#) the Hudson Valley, to make quitting a priority for their patients who smoke. The \$1.3 million cutting-edge campaign features images of health care providers with their mouths stitched or taped shut to dramatize how doctors can help their patients quit by discussing smoking.

State Health Commissioner Richard F. Daines, M.D., said, “We want to challenge clinicians across the state to take time at every office visit to talk to their patients who smoke.” Studies have found that when health care providers take the time to talk to their patients about smoking and offer assistance with quitting, long-term success can be dramatically increased.

“Doctors spend a lot of time treating smoking-related health problems. If we did a better job at helping our patients who want to quit, we could save thousands of lives and alleviate a great deal of suffering,” Commissioner Daines said.

“I always take time to help my patients who want to quit smoking” said Dr. Richard Novitch, Director of Pulmonary Rehabilitation at Burke Rehabilitation Hospital. “I let them know what a difference quitting will make to their health and I offer help like counseling and medicine.”

The *Don't Be Silent About Smoking* campaign ads will be featured in medical journals such as The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), on medical web sites, in major newspapers and in other publications throughout the state. The campaign will begin on February 1, 2008 and run through June 2008. During the first week in February, several full page ads will appear in the Science Times section of The New York Times; The Albany Times Union; The Syracuse Post Standard; The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle and The Buffalo News among others.

The “Don’t Be Silent About Smoking” campaign was created by Better World Advertising in collaboration with the State Health Department Tobacco Control Program and its 19 Cessation Centers across the state. The campaign’s website, [www.TalkToYourPatients.org](http://www.TalkToYourPatients.org), offers easy-to-access information and resources to help health care providers assist their patients who smoke.

Tobacco addiction is the leading preventable cause of death in New York. Approximately 25,500 New Yorkers die every year from smoking. While most anti-smoking efforts target smokers, this campaign speaks directly to doctors, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants.

Two-thirds of smokers in New York State have visited a health care provider in the past year. “This presents a tremendous opportunity for doctors to intervene and give patients the help they need to quit successfully,” Dr. Daines said.

Last year, 55 percent of New York’s 2.6 million smokers attempted to quit. Most smokers try to quit without effective treatment and, as a result, the majority will relapse to smoking. Evidence suggests that helping patients to overcome chronic tobacco dependence is one of the most cost effective interventions clinicians can provide to improve their patients’ health.

In the Hudson Valley, the New York State Department of Health funds two Cessation Centers covering Putnam, Orange, Westchester, Rockland, Dutchess, Ulster and Sullivan Counties, that offer free assistance to clinicians to help their patients quit smoking.

For additional information about quitting smoking, please visit the state Health Department website at [www.nyhealth.gov](http://www.nyhealth.gov) or call the toll-free NY Smokers Quitline at 1-866-697-8487.

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