



STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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www.health.ny.gov

Nirav R. Shah, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

Sue Kelly
Executive Deputy Commissioner

May 2011

Dear Colleague:

I am seeking your help to address the leading preventable cause of disease and death in New York State: tobacco use. Quitting smoking is the most important thing a smoker can do to improve his or her health. Please take advantage of the new New York State Department of Health (Department) campaign, *Fax Five*, designed to help you easily fax-refer at least five patients who want to quit smoking to the New York State Smokers' Quitline. Details about the campaign are below, and you can visit www.talktoyourpatients.org to learn more.

As a fellow health care professional, I understand that you have many demands on your time. However, I also recognize that health care providers are uniquely positioned to have a tremendous impact on the rate of smoking in our state. Assistance from a physician can double or triple a patient's long-term abstinence from smoking.

To assist you in supporting your patients in their efforts to quit smoking, the Department is conducting a *Fax Five* campaign to help physicians across New York refer their patients to the services available through the New York State Smokers' Quitline. The New York State Smokers' Quitline is a free and confidential service that provides evidence-based stop smoking services to New Yorkers who want to stop smoking. The Quitline offers:

- Telephone counseling in English and Spanish. Translations through Language Line Services are available for other languages.
- A two-week starter kit of FREE nicotine replacement medications for eligible smokers.
- Click to quit! Your patients' 24/7 personal online quit coach at www.nysmokefree.com
- A listing of and referrals to local stop smoking programs.

Referring your patients to the Quitline is easy:

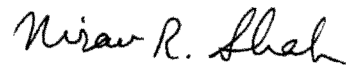
- **Ask** your patients about their tobacco use status.
- **Advise** your patients to quit their tobacco use.
- **Assess** your patients' willingness to quit. If they are ready to quit in the next 30 days, have the patient sign the Fax Referral Form.
- **Fax** the completed form to the New York State Smokers' Quitline. A professional cessation coach will follow up and provide the patient with free coaching, quitting materials and a two-week nicotine replacement therapy starter kit.
- Finally, the Quitline will fax you a report on your patients' progress, which will serve as a reminder for you to follow up with your patient.

I urge you to join me in this important campaign. If each of the 10,000 physicians asked to join *Fax Five* do so, together we have the potential to help 50,000 patients quit smoking.

Visit www.talktoyourpatients.org for more information about how to help your patients who smoke, as well as information about the fax-referral program. You can also download additional referral forms there. Enclosed you'll find a copy of the New York State Cessation Centers' most recent print ad campaign and five copies of the fax-referral form.

Please contact Dr. Jeffrey Willett if you have any questions at (518) 474-1515 or tcp@health.state.ny.us. Thank you for taking the time to consider this important public health initiative.

Sincerely,



Nirav R. Shah, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner of Health

Enclosures

cc: Dr. Willett