

For Immediate Release
May 16, 2008

*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****
**Symposium to Reverse Tobacco's Negative Effects on
Texas' Health Care System**

**Join Men's Health Network, M. D. Anderson, and Senator Rodney Ellis in effort
to break tobacco's deadly grip on Texas.**

Houston, TX – Men's Health Network, American Cancer Society, and American Lung Association will bring together distinguished physicians, key thought leaders, community organizations, and policy makers to discuss the dangers and costs of smoking in Washington State. Among presenters will be Former Washington Governor Gary Locke, Senator Karen Keiser, Senator Jim Kastama, Terry Reid of the Washington State Tobacco Quit Line, and Dr. Bradford Felker of the Department of Veteran's Affairs.

Cigarette smoking is the single most preventable cause of disease and death in Washington. Each year 8,000 people die from smoking-related causes in Washington and tobacco-related disease costs an estimated \$1.53 billion in total health care costs to the state annually, according to the WA State Dept of Health Tobacco Prevention & Control Program Report. The Washington Smoking Cessation Policy Summit will present the latest information and statistics on smoking in Washington State, as well as the latest science to help smokers quit this dangerous addiction.

Date & Time: **October 4, 2007**
 8:30 am - Registration and Breakfast
 9:00 am - 2:00 pm – Summit

Location: **The Westin Seattle**
 1900 5th Avenue
 Seattle, WA 98101
 206-728-1000

Cost: **The event is entirely FREE with a continental breakfast and lunch included!**

To Register: Visit: www.menshealthconference.com
 Register at: <http://www.menshealthnetwork.org/registerdc.htm>
 or Call: 202-543-6461 ext. 101

The Washington Smoking Cessation Policy Summit is part of a series of state symposia on men's health held around the country to educate health professionals and the public-at-large about significant men's health issues. The symposium brings together local, regional, and state public health department officials, state policy leaders, patient and medical associations/organizations, elected officials, and healthcare professionals and leaders as they deal with the challenges of our current healthcare system.

The symposium was made possible with an educational grant from Pfizer.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Ryan Banfill
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Symposium to Reverse Tobacco's Negative Effects on Florida's Health Care System
*Key health care and business leaders join policymakers in effort
to break tobacco's deadly grip on Texas.*

TAMPA, Fla. – Citing recent reports documenting the negative effects of tobacco on Florida's state budget, health care leaders, business officials and policymakers statewide today outlined strategies to improve the health of Florida communities and families and lower health care costs by helping Floridians eliminate cigarettes from their lives.

“Smoking is still the number one cause of preventable death for Americans and Floridians,” said Dr. Charles Mahan, Dean Emeritus at the University of South Florida's College of Public Health. “We are collectively working to prevent the onset of the terrible deaths and diseases associated with this addiction.”

During the one-day Florida Smoking Policy Symposium at Tampa's H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute, a respected group of experts discussed efforts to help people quit smoking.

“We're collectively working to improve the health of our communities,” said Scott Williams, Director of Professional Relations and Public Policy at the Men's Health Network. “Helping smokers eliminate cigarettes from their lives improves their health and improves the health of the people around them. Fewer smokers equals healthier families and communities.”

A recent American Legacy Foundation report shows that if 10 percent of the smokers enrolled in the Florida's Medicaid program quit, the state would save \$35 million in revenue after five years. That number improves to more than \$346 million if every smoker on Medicaid quits.

“Nicotine addiction from smoking is a chronic, relapsing medical condition, and should not be categorized as a simple habit or personal choice,” said Dr. Thomas Brandon, director of the Moffitt Cancer Center's Tobacco Research & Intervention Program. “Because of the relapsing nature of the condition, it may take a smoker several attempts before they have successfully eliminated tobacco from their lives. Smoking cessation benefits should extend to include multiple quit attempts, in case the smoker is not successful on the first, second or third try.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a comprehensive benefit for smoking cessation includes: coverage for at least four counseling sessions of at least 30 minutes each; coverage for all FDA-approved prescription medications and over-the-counter nicotine replacement treatments; and coverage of counseling and medication for at least two smoking cessation attempts per year -- all with low co-pays or deductibles for counseling and medications.

A national survey of employers, sponsored by the National Business Group on Health and the Integrated Benefits Institute, finds most businesses rank smoking as one of the most serious health issues facing their companies – second only to obesity. Only 2

percent, however, now offer the smoking cessation benefits as recommended by the CDC to help their employees successfully eliminate cigarettes from their lives.

CSX Transportation provides a prime example of a Florida company offering comprehensive smoking cessation benefits. By providing support, incentives and encouragement, CSX Transportation has helped 50 percent of its participants make successful quit attempts.

“At CSX Transportation, our attitude is hate smoking by helping the smoker”, said Ken Glover, CSX’s director of health and wellness. “We are working to reduce health care costs and improve productivity by helping employees and their spouses quit smoking through multiple physician visits, medication and counseling opportunities. We also offer our employees comprehensive smoking cessation benefits as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”

The CDC shows tobacco cessation treatments such as CSX’s approach, doubles quitting success rates.

Glover adds, “Helping employees who smoke become smoke-free is not only good for employee wellness; it’s good for business, too.”

According to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, nearly 29,000 deaths in Florida can be attributed to smoking every year, and current annual health care costs directly caused by smoking total \$5.82 billion in this state, plus an additional \$5.86 billion in lost productivity.

“We must make more resources available to smokers who want to quit,” said former State Senator Les Miller. “Helping people to quit smoking is an essential step in saving lives and reducing health care costs to taxpayers, employers and patients.”

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New Report from the American Legacy Foundation® Finds Tobacco-Free States Spend Less on Medicaid

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- America's Medicaid system could spend nearly \$10 billion less within five years if all Medicaid beneficiaries who smoke, quit. A new study released today by the American Legacy Foundation found that effective smoking prevention and cessation programs could cut Medicaid costs by 5.6 percent.

The study went on to examine how much Medicaid programs would save over the course of young smokers' lives if they never smoked. If states could prevent all smoking among current 24-year-olds, Medicaid savings over their lifetimes would be between \$1.4 million (in Alaska and Vermont) and \$125 million (in Texas).

