



News from the Office of  
**ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein**

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### **BURSTEIN EMPHASIZES IMPORTANCE OF “WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY”**

*May 31, 2012; Annual Effort Draws Global Attention to Health Risks of Tobacco*

**ERIE COUNTY, NY**— Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein today joined in a worldwide effort to draw attention to the health risks of tobacco use, which is the leading preventable cause of death worldwide, by adding her voice to the 25<sup>th</sup> annual observation of “World No Tobacco Day”. According to the World Health Organization (“WHO”), approximately 6 million deaths related to tobacco use occur each year, including 600,000 from second-hand smoke. If current trends continue, WHO estimates that by 2030 approximately 8 million people will die each year from tobacco use, and 80% of those people will reside in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>1</sup>

“Erie County has high cancer rates, and almost everyone has a family member or friend who has been affected by this devastating disease,” **said Dr. Burstein**. “Quitting smoking reduces cancer risk for individuals and for the people around them by reducing second hand smoke effects.”

“We join Dr. Burstein in observing World No Tobacco Day. At Roswell Park Cancer Institute, every day is WNTD. Our research shows that things like tobacco-free parks, smoke-free building entrances and protecting our youth from seeing tobacco promotion at store counters educates people about the harm tobacco places on our community and decreases tobacco related disease rates in Erie County,” **said Andrew Hyland, PhD, Chair of the Department of Health Behavior at Roswell Park Cancer Institute**.

According to a New York State Department of Health (“NYSDOH”) report, smoking kills 25,500 people every year in New York, while secondhand smoke kills 2,500 annually. There are an estimated 570,000 New Yorkers afflicted with serious disease directly attributable to their smoking; it is projected that 389,000 New York State youth age 0-17 will die from smoking. Learn more at [http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/tobacco\\_control/](http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/tobacco_control/).

Additionally, a 2010 New York Tobacco Control Program report revealed that an estimated 25,432 people in New York State die prematurely each year as a result of smoking, resulting in 339,646 years of life lost (CDC, 2007a). This significant burden can be reduced with evidence-based tobacco control programs and policy interventions.

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. World No Tobacco Day 2012. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 2012. Available at <http://www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/2012/announcement/en/index.html>

In 1987, WHO designated May 31 as World No Tobacco Day to emphasize the worldwide effects of tobacco use. In 2005, provisions of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco control took effect. A total of 175 countries have ratified this treaty, making it one of the most widely embraced treaties in United Nations history.<sup>2</sup>

The treaty commits countries to protect the public's health by adopting various measures to reduce demand for tobacco. Those measures include increased pricing of tobacco products, protection from exposure to tobacco smoke, and regulation of product contents, packaging, and advertising.<sup>3</sup> A reduction in smoking prevalence worldwide of 20% - 25% could prevent 100 million premature deaths by 2020.<sup>4</sup>

For information on World No Tobacco Day, visit

<http://www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/2012/announcement/en/index.html>

For information on smoking cessation, visit

The American Cancer Society at <http://www.cancer.org/?gclid=CKKKuqmZnLACFQjf4AodYl0ZWw>

Roswell Park Cancer Institute at <http://www.roswellpark.org/>

For information on the Erie County Department of Health, visit <http://www2.erie.gov/health/>

For information on the New York State Department of Health, visit <http://www.health.ny.gov/>

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<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. About the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization; 2012. Available at <http://www.who.int/fctc/about/en/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization. WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Geneva, Switzerland: world Health Organization; 2005. Available at <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2003/9241591013.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Frieden T, Bloomberg M. How to prevent 100 million deaths from tobacco. Lancet 2007; 369:1758-61.