



News from the Office of
ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ

NEWS RELEASE

Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein

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CONTACT: JoAnne Paxon/ JoAnne.Paxon@erie.gov
Phone: (716)858-4941/ Mobile: (716) 912-8692

The American Cancer Society's 37th Annual Great American Smokeout November 15, 2012

Erie County Department of Health encourages smokers to make a plan to quit smoking

ERIE COUNTY, NY— The Erie County Department of Health (“ECDOH”) joins The American Cancer Society in marking the 37th Great American Smokeout on November 15 by encouraging smokers to use the date to make a plan to quit, or to plan in advance and quit smoking that day. By doing so, smokers will be taking an important step towards a healthier life – one that can lead to reducing cancer risk and eliminate the second hand exposure risk of friends and loved ones. “Erie County has high cancer rates, and almost everyone has a family member or friend who has been affected by this devastating disease,” **said** Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein. “Quitting smoking reduces cancer risk for individuals and for the people around them by reducing second hand smoke effects. Quitting is hard, but you can increase your chances of success with help. There are resources and support available that can increase your chances of quitting successfully.”

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the US, yet more than 45 million Americans still smoke cigarettes. However, more than half of these smokers have attempted to quit for at least one day in the past year. Each year, the Great American Smokeout draws attention to the deaths and chronic diseases caused by smoking.

In children, secondhand smoke causes ear infections, more frequent and severe asthma attacks, respiratory symptoms (e.g., coughing, sneezing, shortness of breath), Respiratory infections (i.e., bronchitis, pneumonia) and a greater risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) Second-hand smoke harms children with asthma even more than adults.

When a child is exposed to tobacco smoke, his lungs become irritated and produce more mucus than normal. Since children's airways are smaller, the side effects of second-hand smoke affect them faster and can also affect lung function in later life.

Children of parents who smoke are also more likely to develop lung and sinus infections. These infections can make asthma symptoms worse and more difficult to control.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death for men and women. More than 80% of lung cancer deaths are thought to result from smoking. Smoking also causes cancers of the larynx (voice box), mouth, pharynx (throat), esophagus (swallowing tube), and bladder. It also has been linked to the development of cancers of the pancreas, cervix, ovary (mucinous), colon/rectum, kidney, stomach, and some types of leukemia.

Fortunately, the past few decades have seen great strides in changing attitudes about smoking, understanding the addiction, and learning how to help people quit.

The New York State Smokers' Quitline is a free and confidential service that provides effective stop smoking services to New Yorkers who want to stop smoking. The Quitline offers telephone coaching, a starter kit of FREE nicotine replacement medications for eligible smokers, Click to Quit, a support tool.

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

For additional resources, visit these websites:

New York State Smoker's Quitline

<http://www.nysmokefree.com/newweb/default.aspx>

American Lung Association

<http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/>

The American Cancer Society

<http://www.cancer.org/?gclid=CKKKuqmZnLACFQjf4AodY10ZWw>