



Dear Colleagues:

As a national leader in addiction services, New York took a monumental step on July 24, 2008 by implementing a tobacco-free policy. Overseen by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, the regulation requires all 1,500 OASAS-certified or funded programs to implement a tobacco-free policy in their facility. We recognize this is a significant cultural shift in our field among programs, staff and patients and is taking time to fully implement. With your support and assistance in helping to reach more patients to become tobacco-free, we can save even more lives and ensure healthy recovery.

As you know, the facts remain clear:

- **Tobacco use causes more deaths each year than does alcohol, heroin, cocaine, HIV, homicides, suicides, fires and accidents combined.** (*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Annual Smoking - Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses-United States, 1997-2001*)
- **Tobacco negatively impacts recovery rates from other substances.** (*Elizabeth Stuvt, MD, in The American Journal on Addictions*)
- **Cravings for nicotine increase cravings for other drugs.** (*Taylor et al, 2000*)
- **Smoking cessation reduces the risk of relapse.** (*Sobell, et al., 1995*)

We are sure that you already discuss the many health benefits of quitting the use of tobacco with your patients. However, it is particularly important to assist those patients who are in recovery from chemical dependence, as tobacco is a trigger to other substance use.

If your patient comes to you through a referral from a chemical dependence program, please encourage them to quit and give them a script for pharmacotherapy. Combined with counseling, this approach assists patients with successful recovery from tobacco. Valuable resources are available for your use at <http://www.oasas.ny.gov/tobacco/index.cfm> and <http://www.talktoyourpatients.org/>.

If you need additional information please contact the OASAS medical director at [stevenkipnis@oasas.ny.gov](mailto:stevenkipnis@oasas.ny.gov).

We appreciate your commitment and support in helping to make all New York addiction programs tobacco-free.

Sincerely,

Steven Kipnis MD, FACP, FASAM  
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