The Pharmacy Technician’s Role
In Smoking Cessation Programs

Presented by Thomas Flench, R.Ph., MBA
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**Speaker:** Tom Flench recently retired as the program director for the Pharmacy Technician Program at Horry Georgetown Technician College in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Professor Flench graduated from the Ohio Northern University College of Pharmacy and received his Masters in Business Administration from Lake Erie College. His career includes nearly twenty years in hospital pharmacy and sixteen years in community pharmacy, before being named to the faculty at the college. Tom is a member of the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists and the South Carolina Pharmaceutical Association.

**Speaker Disclosure:** Tom Flench has no actual or potential conflicts of interest in relation to this program.

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The Pharmacy Technician’s Role In Smoking Cessation Programs

**Accreditation:** Technicians-798-000-09-066-L04-T

**Target Audience:** Technicians

**CE Credits:** 1.0 Continuing Education Hour or 0.1 CEU for technicians

**Expiration Date:** 07/13/2012

**Program Overview:** This program will provide pharmacy technicians with an overview of smoking cessations programs. The program will emphasize the role of the Pharmacy technician in assisting patients in their attempts to stop smoking.

**Objectives:**
- Define a Smoking Cessation program
- Understand the motivational reasons for quitting smoking
- Identify the barriers to quitting
- Identify triggers that cause relapses
- Find “escape routes”
- Emphasize your compassion for a healthy life style

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Learning Objectives

- Define a Smoking Cessation program
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Outline

• My background in smoking
• My background in smoking cessation programs
• My individual success
• My patient’s success
• You can help me in this endeavor
Why Quit?

According to the American Heart Association, "Nicotine addiction has historically been one of the hardest addictions to break."

The pharmacological and behavioral characteristics that determine tobacco addiction are similar to those that determine addiction to drugs such as heroin and cocaine.²
Why Quit?  Personal Reasons

• Health reasons

• Financial reasons

• Environmental pressures

• Self-esteem
Why Quit?  
Personal Reasons

Health reasons:

- Cardiac
- Respiratory
- Gastro-intestinal
- Reproductive
- Kidney
- Neurological
Why Quit? Personal Reasons

Financial reasons

• Cigarettes Per Day = 20
• Price Per Pack of Cigarettes = $ 5 ($150/mo.)
• Timespan = 1 year
• Cost of Smoking = $ 1825.00

= 182 Rx co-payments @ $ 10 each !!!!
Why Quit?  Personal Reasons

Environmental pressures

- second hand smoke
- atmospheric
- public
Why Quit? Personal Reasons

Self-esteem

- confidence
- appearance
- ‘personal environment’
- job related
Unapproved Products for Smoking Cessation

- Electronic cigarettes - simulation device
- Nicogel - topical hand product
- Nicotini - an alcoholic drink
- NicVAX - vaccine in clinical trial
Approved Products for Smoking Cessation¹

- Nicotine gum (Nicorette®)
- Nicotine patch (Nicoderm®)
- Nicotine gum (Nicorette®)
- Zyban (Wellbutrin ®)
- Varenicline (Chantix®)
Products for Smoking Cessation¹

• Nicotine gum is a type of chewing gum that delivers varying levels of nicotine to the body.
• The pieces are available in unit of use packages and come in orange and mint flavors.
• Each piece contains 2 or 4 mg of nicotine, which equals the nicotine content of 1 or 2 cigarettes.
• Appropriate dosing depends on the smoking history of the user.
Products for Smoking Cessation

• A nicotine patch is a transdermal device that releases nicotine into the user’s body through the skin.
• It is used as a method to quit smoking.
• The first patch appeared in 1993.
Products for Smoking Cessation

• A nicotine nasal spray contains a small dose of nicotine, which enters the body by being absorbed through the nasal lining.

• This may stop nicotine cravings that occur when a person is trying to quit smoking.

• In the U.S., a prescription is needed for a nicotine nasal spray.
Approved Products for Smoking Cessation

“In 1997, the FDA approved bupropion, an antidepressant already sold as Wellbutrin but rebranded it as Zyban, an anti-smoking drug.”
“Varenicline is only the second nicotine-free smoking cessation drug. Pfizer Inc. sells the twice-daily tablet as Chantix. Varenicline latches on to the same receptors in the brain that nicotine binds to when inhaled in cigarette smoke, an action that leads to the release of dopamine in the pleasure centers of the brain. Taking the drug blocks any inhaled nicotine from reinforcing that effect.”
Defining a Smoking Cessation Program

- Define the individual’s motivating factors
- Show how to eliminate perceived obstacles
- Learn how to deal with life without cigarettes
- Become a ‘cheerleader’ for their team effort
- Implement an individualized plan
Define the individual’s motivating factors

• It is usually a life event that has opened their mind to the desire to quit smoking.

• Anything less than a life event won’t do it.
  – Not pressure from another person
  – Not a passing fancy
  – Not a TV commercial
  – Not running out of smokes or lighters
Define the individual’s motivating factors

Life Events such as ........

– Heart attack, cancer, emphysema
– Loss of a friend/loved one due to smoking
– A pet’s illness due to effects of 2nd hand smoke
– Divorce
– Job
– Other life events
Show how to eliminate perceived obstacles

- “Tried before and wasn’t successful…..”

- Misinformation

- “Cigarettes are good for me”

- Get rid of smoking supplies
Tried before and wasn’t successful

Perceived obstacles

• A bet
• Didn’t want to
• Bad timing
• Hadn’t given it much thought

• Blah Blah Blah !!!!!!!
Misinformation

Perceived obstacles

They were told that:

– They would be less healthy
– They would gain weight
– Stress levels would increase
– Withdrawal
“Cigarettes are good for me”

**Perceived obstacles**

- Help me to relax
- Gives me something to do
- I hate crosswords and sudoku !!!
Get rid of smoking supplies

Perceived obstacles

• Lighters
• Matches
• Ashtrays
• Car lighter
• Misc. supplies
Learn how to deal with life after cigarettes

Except for when they were a child, smokers have always been smokers, regardless of everything else they have accomplished;

- High school and/or college degree
- Married
- Raising Children
- Jobs
- Hobbies
Learn how to deal with life after cigarettes

Change what they do when they used to "need" a cigarette by rethinking....

- Where they usually take a break or meal at work
- What they will do in spare time
- Avoid "smoking" activities/places/people
Learn how to deal with life after cigarettes

• Label & Visualize yourself as a **NON-SMOKER**

• Besides males and females, there are two types of people in this world
  – Smokers – the person you were
  – Non-smokers – the person you **want** to be
Learn how to deal with life after cigarettes

• Label & Visualize yourself as a **NON-SMOKER**

• This is now the person you have always wanted to be, and now you are.

• Keep a calendar and keep track of the days of success, which become weeks, then months, then years.
Become a ‘cheerleader’ for their team effort

- Be that happy person in the non-smoker’s life.
- Ask for updates on how long they have been a non-smoker.
- Compliment them on their appearance and attitude.
- Ask if the product they are using to help stop is working and convenient for them.
Become a ‘cheerleader’ for their team effort

Pharmacist’s responsibility to:

– Also be supportive to their goal
– Also be that cheerleader
– Ask if the product selection was a good one
– Re-emphasize that the “new you” looks great
– Remind them to take BPs often for ‘visual’ proof
Implement an individualized plan

The pharmacist’s responsibility is to;

– Keep patient focused on the program
– Review meds
– Remind about new products or alternatives
– Review use of items used to help stop smoking
– Answer questions and keep positive attitudes
Implement an individualized plan

Once a person decides to quit, planning how and when is the next step.

- Plan a date to quit.
- Plan how the patient will kick the habit.
- Plan what they will do and who they can talk to if they feel a relapse coming on.
- Plan celebration techniques and occasions.
- Plan on being successful.
Find “escape routes”

Escape routes are a way of saying, “what will I do if I let myself think, it’s not working”.

• Remind yourself how long you have gone without a cigarette.
• Don’t suffer through a smoker making life miserable for you, be proactive.
• Keep new activities/diversions at the ready.
Find “escape routes”

What will I do if I think it’s not working?

- Call/talk to a supportive friend/associate.
- Visit the pharmacy.
- Remember why I am doing this.
- Stay focused and positive.
Emphasize your compassion for a healthy life style

• As a technician, you are one of the few people who have a positive effect on your customer’s life. You are the front-line person they associate with your drug store.

• Make sure the following patient education issues are being addressed.
Patient Education

• Use exactly as directed; do not use more often than prescribed.

• Stop smoking completely during therapy.

• Do not smoke, chew tobacco, use snuff, or any other form of nicotine.

• Nicotine overdose could occur.
Patient Education:

Gum:

• Chew slowly for 30 minutes.

• Discard chewed gum away from access by children.
Patient Education:

Lozenge:

- Allow to dissolve slowly in the mouth.
- Do not chew or swallow lozenge whole.
- Avoid food or drink 15 minutes prior to, during, or after lozenge.
Patient Education:

Transdermal patch:

Follow directions in package for dosing schedule and use. Do not cut patches or wear more than one patch at a time. Remove backing from patch and press immediately on skin. Hold for 10 seconds. Apply to clean, dry skin in different site each day. Do not touch eyes; wash hands after application.
Patient Education:

Spray:

- Follow directions in package. Blow nose gently before use.
- Excessive use can result in severe (even life-threatening) reactions.
- You may experience temporary stinging or burning after spray.
QUESTIONS
References

1. Wikipedia, “Nicotine”

2. American Heart Association [www.aha.org](http://www.aha.org)

3. University of Maryland Medical Center, “Smoking Cessation Products”

4. [www.smoking-cessation.org](http://www.smoking-cessation.org) (Andrew Bridges, Associated Press Writer)