



EMBARGOED
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**NEW NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM SHOWS SMOKERS
HOW TO BECOME AN EX®**
Oklahoma Signs On As Founding Member of National Alliance for Tobacco Cessation

WASHINGTON, D.C./OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. – An unprecedented new public health campaign created by an alliance of national organizations and state health agencies, **including the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust and the Oklahoma State Department of Health**, was launched today in Washington, DC. The free program, called **EX®**, will change the way smokers think about the difficult process of quitting, and guide them to valuable resources to build a successful quit attempt. Not since the Fairness Doctrine was applied to tobacco in 1968-1970 have so many public health organizations aligned to get a smoking cessation message to the public at large.

This new public education effort will encourage the **25.1 percent of Oklahoma adults who smoke** to approach quitting smoking as "re-learning life without cigarettes." **EX** provides smokers with information that can help them prepare for a quit attempt by 1) "Re-learning" their thinking on the behavioral aspects of smoking and how different smoking triggers can be overcome with practice and preparation; 2) "Re-learning" their knowledge of addiction and how medications can increase their chances for quitting success; and 3) "Re-learning" their ideas of how support from friends and family members can play a critical role in quitting.

Nationally, **EX** will educate smokers through advertisements on television, radio and online and via out-of-home promotions. The program also offers smokers a free, new Web site, www.BecomeAnEX.org, which features action-oriented tools and information to help smokers prepare for quitting by developing a personalized plan, as well as a virtual community, where smokers can share stories and best practices about their quit attempt.

The Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) and the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) plan to help support the national EX media campaign with additional statewide television, radio and outdoor advertising. The BecomeAnEx.org Web site will be promoted in print materials and linked with Oklahoma's tobacco use prevention Web site, StopsWithMe.com. Other community activities to promote BecomeAnEx.org are being planned for early summer.

"Oklahoma is proud to be a founding member of the National Alliance for Tobacco Cessation," said Tracey Strader, TSET executive director. "The tobacco industry has successfully marketed its deadly products in Oklahoma and our tobacco use rates are significantly higher than national rates. We believe the 'Become an Ex' campaign will provide a strong voice of empathy and support for tobacco users and encourage them to take advantage of effective tobacco cessation services."

Most smokers in America – 70 percent – want to quit, but in 2000, only about five percent were successful in quitting long-term. Quitting smoking is ultimately one of the single most important lifestyle changes one can make to improve and extend their lives. Tobacco-related death is the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.; smokers therefore need to be armed with all the available information to make the best, most informed choices about the smoking cessation medications and resources available to them.

In 2006-2007, The American Legacy Foundation®, the national public health foundation best known for its **truth®** youth-smoking prevention campaign pilot tested **EX** in four markets throughout the country, Buffalo, NY, San Antonio, TX, Grand Rapids, Mich. and Baltimore, Md. As a result of the successful pilot program, Legacy has brought together several national organizations and 14 states to form the National Alliance for Tobacco Cessation (NATC) and launch **EX** nationally. The NATC is a growing group of states, non-profit organizations, foundations and corporations, all dedicated to helping people quit smoking.

(MORE)

EX is brought to you by the National Alliance for Tobacco Cessation. Find out more at TheNATC.org.

“New National Public Health Program Shows Smoker How to *Become An Ex*” – ADD ONE

Founding members of the NATC include:

- The American Cancer Society
- The American Heart Association
- National Cancer Institute
- The American Legacy Foundation
- C-Change
- The Mayo Clinic
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- The Association of State and Health Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)
- Arkansas Department of Health
- Arizona Department of Health Services Bureau of Tobacco Education and Prevention
- Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation
- Missouri Foundation for Health
- The Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco-Free Living
- Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Bureau of Primary Care and Rural Health Tobacco Control Program
- Missouri Foundation for Health
- New Hampshire Tobacco Prevention and Control Program
- New York Department of Health Center for Health Promotions
- North Carolina Division of Public Health
- North Dakota Department of Health Division of Tobacco Prevention & Control
- **Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust and Oklahoma State Department of Health**
- Oregon Public Health Division Department of Human Services Tobacco Prevention and Education Program
- Rhode Island Department of Health
- Washington State Department of Health Tobacco Prevention and Control Program
- Wyoming Department of Health

All of these organizations agree that while smokers may know *why* they should quit, many just don't know *how*. Therefore, **EX** steers away from focusing solely on the reasons for quitting and instead empowers smokers to use FREE resources and methods that have been proven to increase smokers' chances of quitting successfully.

“Most smokers who want to quit do not understand what it takes to conquer their nicotine addiction, or they underestimate how powerful that addiction can be,” says American Legacy Foundation President and CEO Cheryl Heaton, Dr. P.H. “The approach provided by **EX** changes that equation by showing them how they can quit – namely by combining coaching, pharmacotherapy and social support, so that smokers have the support that they need at the times when they're most likely to crave a cigarette and smoke.”

EX tools were designed in collaboration with Mayo Clinic and with input from former and current smokers who have lived with this struggle, in order to provide smokers with a realistic approach based on evidence-based research.

The BecomeAnEX.org Web site brings the “re-learn” idea to life, offering action-oriented content and videos to help smokers re-learn all aspects of their smoking addiction. The site helps users develop a personalized quit plan that includes medication and support, plus it gives them an opportunity to practice breaking the “glue” between cigarettes and their associated triggers, before they actually stop smoking. Those visiting the site will be able to:

- Create customized quit plans – including selecting a quit date, determining their own smoking “triggers” and developing a program that best suits their individual needs. By helping smokers gain a holistic understanding of their smoking behavior, the **EX** website will help smokers be better prepared for the difficulties that may lie ahead after throwing away that last pack.
- Connect to a virtual support group that allows those who are trying to quit sharing their experiences and challenges. Social support is a significant factor in helping smokers quit successfully.
- Learn more about pharmacotherapy resources, such as nicotine replacement patches, lozenges, gum and prescription medications. These products can help reduce withdrawal symptoms and cravings during the short term, and allow smokers to deal with the behavior changes needed to make sure they stay off cigarettes for good.
- Link to quit-smoking resources in Alliance states.

(MORE)

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“New National Public Health Program Shows Smoker How to *Become An Ex*” – ADD TWO

The ads for **EX** were produced by Austin, Texas-based **Idea City/GSD&M**, the agency of record for the American Legacy Foundation’s advertising on smoking cessation. New York City-based **phd** conceptualized and implemented the media planning and buying strategy for the **EX** campaign.

EX[®] is a free, new public health campaign presented by the National Alliance for Tobacco Cessation, a collaboration of the nation’s leading public health organizations and 14 states. The campaign will build smokers confidence in quitting smoking and guide them to useful resources that foster successful quit attempts. **EX** is the culmination of several years of research and testing, combining an understanding of the power of nicotine addiction with messages that resonate with and motivate smokers toward behavior change. The **EX** approach is peer to peer and focuses on re-learning life without cigarettes, targeting the activities that prompt smokers to light up at the same times every day. The campaign, which began airing nationwide on March 31, 2008 includes television, radio, online, out-of-home advertising and a free state-of-the-art, interactive Web site (www.BecomeAnEX.org) with tips and tools for quitting including personalized quit plans, and a virtual community where smokers can share stories and strategies about their experiences quitting. Founding members of the NATC include the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the National Cancer Institute, the American Legacy Foundation, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and clinical partner, the Mayo Clinic.

The **Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust** was established through a constitutional amendment approved by Oklahoma voters in 2000. While most state governments have failed to keep their promise to use tobacco settlement funds for tobacco prevention and other programs to improve health, Oklahomans have created an endowment to assure that funds will be available for these purposes for generations to come. To learn more go to: www.tset.ok.gov. To learn more about Oklahoma’s tobacco cessation, prevention and protection efforts, go to: www.StopsWithMe.com.

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