

"The good news is, we know what it takes to save millions of lives, and where efforts exist, they are working."

- Bill Gates, Founder of Microsoft

"No smoker wants to be a smoker..."

- Jeana Farelli, New York City artist

Helping Employees Quit Tobacco Use

Tobacco Use is Costly

Tobacco use is a major risk factor for many diseases, including heart disease and cancer. Additionally, it complicates many other conditions from diabetes to infertility. According to the Georgia Division of Public Health,

- Over 10,000 Georgians die every year from smoking-related illnesses.
- 22% of adult males and 18% of adult females are smokers.
- Adult smokers lose an average of 16 years of life compared to adult non-smokers.

Not only is tobacco use a significant health concern, it is a costly behavior, both for the individual and the health system at large. Here is some information of tobacco-related costs in Georgia:

- An estimated \$5 billion every year.
- Smoking accounts for \$1.8 billion in healthcare costs among adults 18 years and older.
- \$3.3 billion in lost productivity costs among adults 35 years and older is attributable to smoking.

What Can Employers Do?

- 71% of employers indicate that the cost of providing health care benefits to active employees is a top priority (Deloitte Consulting, LLP).
- 70% of smokers want to quit (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention).

What role does the employer have in addressing an individual's unhealthy behavior? In a 2002 survey of Georgia worksites, 93% had a formal tobacco policy. In addition to implementing a policy, there are other strategies employees can implement to help employees quit tobacco use (not just smoking). These strategies can be divided into two categories: carrots and sticks.

Carrots refer to the gentle, rewards-based approaches to steer someone towards the desired behavior. These can include:

- Offering incentives to employees who quit tobacco use.
- Health insurance premium credits for employees who do not use tobacco.
- Providing low/no-cost cessation programs onsite.
- Offering subsidies to cover the cost of cessation counseling.

Sticks are tougher, no-compromise approaches that demand a desired behavior. Examples of sticks are:

- Higher health premiums for tobacco users.
- Surcharges for employees who indicate that they use tobacco.
- Terminating violators of a smoking policy.

The choice of the type of approach to take in addressing tobacco use in the worksite

varies depending on company size, resources, and other factors. There is no right or wrong approach, but a blend of these strategies is an effective way to address employees' tobacco use. As an example, a company that adopts a 100% tobacco-free policy should also provide cessation services to its employees prior to the effective date of the new policy. This will allow employees a chance to quit tobacco use without penalty. It will also ensure more successful quit attempts than going "cold turkey".

Available Cessation Resources

When promoting tobacco cessation at the worksite, there is help available to businesses. Local resources can alleviate the burden of having to cover the full cost of a cessation program onsite, particularly for smaller companies. Below are some resources that can provide educational materials, training, and technical assistance for promoting employee health and wellness. These include:

- [The Georgia Tobacco Quit Line](http://health.state.ga.us/pdfs/chronic/tobacco/cessationlist.pdf).
- A list of community cessation resources is available at <http://health.state.ga.us/pdfs/chronic/tobacco/cessationlist.pdf>.
- Local hospitals.
- Local health departments.
- American Lung Association.
- American Cancer Society.



WELLNESS WATCH

With rising gas prices, teleworking has become an alternative to daily commute to work for many employees. According to WorldatWork, approximately 45 million Americans worked remotely at least one day during all of 2006. Supporters of teleworking tout it as a solution to reduce emissions and improve air quality, as well as employee work-life balance. However, teleworking has benefits for the employer as well, including improved employee morale, reduced absenteeism and turnover, and increased productivity. Furthermore, teleworking can help keep other employees healthy by reducing exposure to cold and flu germs that spread in confined workplaces.

The Great American SmokeOut®

Did you know that...?

- The American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout® challenges people to stop using tobacco and raises awareness of the many [effective ways to quit for good](#).
- The idea for the Great American Smokeout® grew out of Minnesota's first D-Day, or Don't Smoke Day event in 1974.
- Research shows that smokers are most successful in kicking the habit when they have some means of support, such as nicotine replacement products, counseling, and prescription medicine to lessen cravings.
- Only about 1 in 7 current smokers tried any of the recommended therapies during his or her last quit attempt (American Cancer Society).

More than 10,000 Georgians die every year from tobacco-related illnesses, which is more than deaths from alcohol, cocaine, heroin, AIDS, murder, suicide, auto accidents and fires combined. Additionally, approximately 1.3 million adults in Georgia smoke cigarettes. As an employer, you are probably aware of the burden of tobacco, not just as a personal problem for many of your employees. As a primary risk factor for many diseases, tobacco use weighs heavily on health care costs and productivity.

During November, two great opportunities exist to provide help to employees about quitting the use of tobacco. Nov. 15 marks the 7th anniversary of the Georgia Tobacco Quit Line, a free resource to Georgians who want to quit using tobacco. The line offers free counseling, screening, support, and referrals to local cessation services. Trained counselors are available to assist callers in creating a personalized quit plan. Follow-up counseling sessions can be scheduled to help callers reach their goals. Since its inception, more than 35,000 Georgians have received help from the Quit Line.

Additionally, the annual Great American Smokeout® on Thursday, Nov. 20, serves as an ideal catalyst for quitting tobacco use. On that day, individuals are encouraged to make the first step by quitting tobacco for one day. To help you celebrate the Great



American Smokeout® and promote smoking cessation at your worksite, the American Cancer Society has compiled resources and ideas at <http://www.cancer.org/docroot/subsite/greatamericans/smokeout.asp>. You can find:

- [The Great American Smokeout Employer Toolkit](#)
- [Smokeout Countdown Clock](#)
- [Smokefree Policies Improve Workers' Health](#)
- [It's Never Too Late to Quit Payroll Stuffer](#)

Here are some things that your company can do to participate in the Great American Smokeout®:

- Send e-mail message with tips to help employees quit.
- Organize cessation support groups.
- Launch a workplace cessation class.
- Provide incentives to employees who quit.
- Include quizzes and other activities to educate employees on the importance of quitting.
- Set up stations where employees can trade in their cigarettes for patches, lozenges, and other forms of nicotine replacement therapy.
- Post flyers telling employees about cessation resources in your area.
- Encourage employees to take advantage of the Georgia Tobacco Quit Line. The Georgia Tobacco Use Prevention Program has posters and other educational materials about the Quit Line available for your employees at no charge. Please contact Martha Dismer or Kenneth Ray at 404-657-6611.

There is enough time to plan activities for November 20. No matter what you decide to do, take the first step in helping your employees stop smoking. Celebrate the Great American Smokeout®.

Contributing writer Kenny Ray is the Program Manager for Georgia's Tobacco Use Prevention Program.

Health Observance



September

National Suicide Prevention Week (Sept 7-13)
American Association of Suicidology
<http://www.suicidology.org/>

World Heart Day (September 28)
World Heart Federation
<http://www.world-heart-federation.org/>

Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month
National Ovarian Cancer Coalition
<http://www.ovarian.org/>

Prostate Cancer Awareness Month
National Prostate Cancer Coalition
<http://www.fightprostatecancer.org/>

September
America on the Move
<http://www.americanonthemove.org/>

Fruit and Veggies – More Matters Month
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/>

Healthy Aging Month
Educational Television Network, Inc.
<http://www.healthyaging.net/events.htm>

National Cholesterol Education Month
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
<http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/cholmonth/>

Whole Grains Month
The Whole Grains Council
<http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org/>

October

Drive Safely Work Week
Network of Employers for Traffic Safety
<http://www.dol.gov/odep>

Talk About Prescriptions Month
National Council on Patient Info & Education
<http://www.talkaboutrx.org/>

Healthy Lung Month
American Lung Association
<http://www.lungusa.org/>

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
NBCAM Board of Sponsors
<http://www.nbcam.org/>

National Dental Hygiene Month
American Dental Hygienists' Association
<http://www.adha.org/>

National Disability Employment Awareness Month
US Department of Labor
<http://www.dol.gov/odep>

November

Great American Smokeout® (Nov. 20)
American Cancer Society
<http://www.cancer.org/>

American Diabetes Month
American Diabetes Association
<http://www.diabetes.org/>

Lung Cancer Awareness Month
Lung Cancer Alliance
<http://www.lungcanceralliance.org/>

Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month
Pancreatic Cancer Action Network
<http://www.pancan.org/>



RESOURCE CORNER

OTHER GEORGIA PROGRAMS

Georgia Tobacco Quit Line

The Georgia Tobacco Quit Line is a free cessation resource available to all Georgians ages 13 and older. Counselors are available everyday from 8am to midnight everyday to help guide tobacco users through a behavioral counseling module. It is a great way for an employer to promote cessation services for its employees.

The Quit Line is now offering free nicotine replacement therapy for residents in the following five public health districts: Northwest (Rome), North Georgia (Dalton), South (Valdosta), Southeast (Waycross) and Coastal (Savannah/Brunswick).

Call the Quit Line
English: 1-877-270-STOP (7867)
Spanish: 1-877-2NO-FUME (266-3863)
TTY: 1-877-6534 (Hearing Impaired)

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Community Cessation Resource List

This referral list has community resources organized by county. You can find cessation classes in your area and refer employees to them. Available at <http://health.state.ga.us/pdfs/chronic/tobacco/cessationlist.pdf>.

Great American Smokeout®

The American Cancer Society has compiled a variety of resources on the Great American Smokeout®. You can get different materials, including posters and tent cards to promote the event at your worksite and encourage employees to quit tobacco use. Go to <http://www.cancer.org/docroot/subsite/gr eatamericans/smokeout.asp>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Benefits Management Forum & Expo
Sept. 21-23, 2008, National Harbor, MD
<http://benefits-forum.com/index.html>

6th Annual Women's Health Summit
September 24-25, 2008, Atlanta, GA
<http://dch.georgia.gov/summit>

Georgia Safety, Health & Environmental Conference
October 7-9, 2008, Savannah, GA
<http://georgiaconference.org/>

Georgia Association of Occupational Health Nurses Fall Conference
October 29-31, 2008, Peachtree City, GA
<http://gaohn.org/aohn08.pdf>

Georgia Public Health Association Annual Conference
December 3-4, 2008, Savannah, GA
<http://www.gapha.org/annual-meeting-conference/>

WORKSITE WELLNESS IN THE NEWS

[Cities move to teach all employees CPR](#) – USA Today, June 3, 2008

[Pension liabilities loom as states try to help retirees](#) – USA Today, June 11, 2008

[Flipping through the options on health records sites](#) – USA Today, June 11, 2008

[Standing up for workers' rights in a country known for loyalty](#) – NY Times, June 11, 2008

[Japan, seeking trim waists, measures millions](#) – NY Times, June 13, 2008

[US court rules against MetLife in benefits case](#) – Reuters, June 19, 2008

[In a ruling on benefits, justices aid the worker](#) – NY Times, June 20, 2008

[UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT; Waistlines expand into a workplace issue](#) – NY Times, June 22, 2008

[Drug chains and benefits managers team on e-prescriptions](#) – Reuters, July 1, 2008

[Minn. judge rules against Wal-Mart on work breaks](#) – USA Today, July 1, 2008

[Rising health-care costs hurt small biz](#) – BusinessWeek, July 2, 2008

[Employers use federal law to deny benefits](#) – USA Today, July 5, 2008

[Small business is latest focus in health fight](#) – NY Times, July 10, 2008

[Bereaved Japan mother angered by deadly overwork](#) – Reuters, July 18, 2008

[A hidden toll on employment: Cut to part time](#) – New York Times, July 31, 2008

[Study: Health costs seen rising, but ...](#) – USA Today, August 11, 2008

[Health benefits inspire rush to marry, or divorce](#) – New York Times, August 12, 2008

[Tool Kit: Problems, we've got problems](#) – NY Times, August 18, 2008

[States push laws to require paid sick days](#) – USA Today, August 20, 2008

[Extra pounds mean insurance fees for Ala. workers](#) – Associated Press, August 22, 2008



Georgia's Worksite Health Initiative
Georgia DHR – Div. of Public Health
www.health.state.ga.us/programs/worksitehealth
WorksiteHealth@dhr.state.ga.us