

**CITY OF BALTIMORE**

SHEILA DIXON, Mayor



**HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner  
210 Guilford Avenue  
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TO: Baltimore physicians  
Nurse practitioners  
Physician's assistants

DATE: January 16, 2008

FROM: Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D.  
Commissioner of Health

RE: **February 1 is a Great Day for Public Health**

On February 1, 2008, Baltimore and Maryland clean air laws go into effect. This means that smoking will no longer be permitted in restaurants and bars across the city and state.

As this landmark day approaches, many smokers will be asking themselves: Is it worth it for me to keep smoking? Or should I try to quit?

Let's help them quit for good.

Here are some evidence-based ways to help your patients to beat the number one cause of preventable death in the United States.

**1. At each visit, encourage your patients to stop smoking.**

Evidence shows that support from clinicians can increase the success rates of patients attempting to quit. The Surgeon General recommend the five A's of cessation counseling: ask, advise, assess, assist, and arrange.

See <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/5steps.pdf>

**2. Tell your patients how to access the FREE state tobacco quitline.**

Your patients can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) and receive four free counseling calls plus a free, four-week supply of the nicotine patch (while supplies last).

**3. Refer your patients to a smoking cessation class.**

Call 410-545-1530 or 410-396-1438 to learn more about free smoking cessation services in Baltimore; free nicotine patches are available to those who attend classes, for as long as it takes to quit.

Visit <http://www.baltimorehealth.org/tobacco> for a list of community providers offering smoking cessation programs.

**4. Consider prescribing such drugs as Zyban or Chantix to appropriate patients.**

These drugs have been proven to help patients quit. Clinical guidelines on using these drugs can be found at <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/clinpack.html>.

Let's take advantage of February 1 – *the start of a month devoted to reducing heart disease!* – to save many lives in Baltimore.

And thank you again for everything you do on behalf of the health of city residents.