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New Year's Resolution—Free Smoking Cessation Program Begins January 8

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Written by Putnam County Health Dept.



The Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) is encouraging residents who smoke to begin their journey toward a smoke-free life. Quitting smoking isn't easy and the PCDOH is supporting residents with an evidence-based approach to kicking the habit.

By offering residents a free smoking cessation program, with a group "Quit Day", residents can make a new year's resolution that could save their lives. According to the American Cancer Society, nearly 38 million Americans still smoke cigarettes, and smoking remains the single largest preventable cause of death and illness in the world.

The eight-week Freedom From Smoking (FFS) program starts January 8, and continues on Tuesdays and Thursdays, at 12:30 p.m., at the health department's main office at 1 Geneva Road, Brewster. Each session lasts 45 minutes. The last class is on February 28.

The group leader is a FFS/American Lung Association-certified facilitator from the health department. The sessions start with discussions and guidance for preparing and planning to quit. Each person's experience with quitting smoking is different. The Freedom From Smoking program uses proven activities and tools to help participants understand their own relationship with tobacco—and how to have a smoke-free life. Nicotine replacement products (NRT) such as the patch and gum will be available, also for free, while supplies last. Using NRT is encouraged, and will be discussed in detail as part of the program, but it is not required.

Widely regarded as the gold standard in quit-smoking programs, the FFS program was created by the American Lung Association, an organization with more than 50 years of experience helping smokers quit. Some smokers feel hopeless after unsuccessful attempts at quitting. The FFS Program recognizes these feelings are part of the journey to become a non-smoker and stresses the fact that most successful quitters have failed at it before. The program empowers participants to create their own path to success by instilling strategies for managing stress, avoiding weight gain and staying active during their quit, and after.

"There are health benefits to quitting no matter your age or the length of time you have been a smoker," says interim Commissioner of Health Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD, from the PCDOH. Dr. Nesheiwat emphasizes that quitting tobacco today means something different than it did ten years ago. "Whether you are a longtime smoker or you have switched from cigarettes to e-cigarettes or another tobacco product, this could be your time to successfully avoid tobacco altogether." Combustible tobacco products kill seven million people worldwide each year.

Pre-registration is required, as group size is limited. More information on the program can be found online at www.freedomfromsmoking.org. For more information or to pre-register, contact the Putnam County Department of Health at (845) 808-1390, ext. 43155.

The mission of the Putnam County Department of Health, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community, composed of nearly 100,000 residents. Core services include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control,

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