

Media Release

Windsor-Essex County Health Unit

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For Immediate Release – Windsor-Essex County

Free Nicotine Replacement Therapy for Eligible Smokers

The Smoking Treatment for Ontario Patients (STOP) Study, the first study of its kind in Canada, is coming to Windsor-Essex.

Windsor-Essex County residents who are smokers, 18 years or older, not pregnant or breastfeeding, and have not experienced any recent cardiovascular problems, are eligible to participate in the *STOP Study*.

Half day *STOP Study* workshops are being held on Tuesday, March 6 in Essex, Wednesday, March 7 in Windsor and Thursday, March 8 in Windsor. *Stop Study* participants will learn about Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), create a plan to quit smoking and obtain free NRT at the completion of the workshop. The effectiveness of the NRT for study participants will be monitored for 12 months.

To find out if they are eligible to participate in the Stop Study, interested smokers should call the Health Unit's **Tobacco Hotline at 519-258-2146 x 3218**.

Neil Mackenzie, Manager of the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit's Tobacco Program thinks that the Stop Study is a welcome addition to the Health Unit's effort to help Windsor-Essex County smokers quit. "I encourage anyone who is thinking about quitting smoking and interested in accessing Nicotine Replacement Therapy to find out if they qualify for the Stop Study. This might be just what some smokers need to help them quit for good" adds MacKenzie.

Stop Study Backgrounder

Introduced in January 2006 through a partnership of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) and the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, the study has already provided free NRT such as nicotine gum or patches to an unprecedented 13,000 people and helped 1,600 Ontarians quit smoking.

At least 12 per cent of participants in the study have successfully quit smoking and stayed off tobacco for six months as a direct result of the nicotine replacement therapy supplied by CAMH.

While smoking rates in Ontario have declined over the past twenty years, 1.6 million Ontarians continue to smoke and 16,000 die each year from tobacco related illnesses. Studies reveal that attempts to quit smoking are more successful when done with the help of a nicotine cessation aid. However, many people do not use this resource, often due to cost. By demonstrating the numbers who quit when given free access to nicotine replacement therapies, the STOP Study has shown to date that access is a significant factor.

For more detailed information on the STOP Study please call The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health at 416-260-4158 or e-mail stop_study@camh.net

For more information or to schedule an interview with Dr. Peter Selby, Clinical Director of Addiction Programs, CAMH and Principal Investigator of the STOP Study, please contact: Michael Torres, Media Relations, CAMH at 416 595-6015 or email: michael_torres@camh.net