

## *for Dental Professionals*

### We Can Save Lives *and* Build Our Practice

#### As Oral Health Care Professionals:

- We have interviewing skills that allow us to assess patient tobacco use and desire to quit.
  - We review medical histories and are aware of patients who smoke or chew.
- We have the skills to: educate patients about the medical and dental implications of tobacco use; respectfully discuss the benefits of quitting; and motivate patients to quit.
- The trust and rapport we have with our patients is beneficial in effecting behavior change.
- Our patients are used to visiting the dental office on a regular basis. Patient follow-up with tobacco cessation can be incorporated into the regular recall routine.
- A tobacco-cessation protocol in the dental office setting can be brief, simple and does not need to disrupt the practice routine.
- Expanding our professional services to include a tobacco-cessation program is an excellent practice builder.
- Helping patients to free themselves of their addiction is extremely rewarding to the dental team. Brief tobacco cessation interventions may take only a small amount of office time but, when successful, may greatly improve our patient's quality of life and save lives.



#### Perceived Barriers to Tobacco Treatment:

Some dental health care professionals:

- Don't believe it is their responsibility... but, in reality, tobacco use causes significant oral health problems.
- Are concerned with patient perception of this program in the dental office setting... but research shows patients will appreciate the help and concern if approached in a low-key, nonjudgmental and sensitive manner.
- Think it takes too much time... but interventions can be brief (less than three minutes), simple and do not need to disrupt the practice routine.
- Feel that they can't be reimbursed for this service... but fees can be charged in conjunction with other treatment or separately.
- Are concerned about effectiveness of the program... but intervention has been shown to be very effective in the dental office setting.
- Feel uncomfortable because of lack of training... but this tool will assist you.