

UW-CTRI News Release

University of Wisconsin Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention

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Campaign Launches to Help Parents Quit Smoking 60 Percent of Wisconsin Children Regularly Exposed to Secondhand Smoke

MILWAUKEE – Dr. Michael Fiore today announced the launch of the Healthy Air for Kids campaign, a new initiative which will encourage parents to talk to their child's doctor about quitting smoking—not just for their health, but for the health of their children. The campaign will also offer training, materials and technical assistance to pediatricians and family practice providers.

Fiore, a UW professor of medicine and the director of the UW Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention (UW-CTRI), announced the campaign at a gathering of 100 doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals at St. Joseph's Outpatient Center in Wauwatosa. Hundreds of healthcare providers from across the state also joined the event via webcast to discuss how to best help parents quit smoking.

"It's critical that we give doctors the tools they need to help parents quit smoking, and to encourage all parents who smoke to quit," says Fiore.

Secondhand smoke is a serious problem for children across the state. Almost 60 percent of children are regularly exposed to secondhand smoke, according to the most recent surgeon general report. As a result, these kids developed pneumonia, ear infections, bronchitis, SIDS and asthma.

"The scientific evidence is now indisputable: Second-hand smoke is a serious health hazard that can lead to disease and premature death in children," says former U.S. Surgeon General Richard Carmona.

(more)

Through the Healthy Air for Kids campaign, healthcare providers across the state will receive information on the latest FDA-approved medications and counseling proven to help smokers quit. There will also be posters and brochures for parents in waiting rooms across the state to encourage them to talk to their doctor about quitting. The campaign is funded by a grant from the Ira and Ineva Reilly Baldwin Wisconsin Idea Endowment.

When doctors do intervene, quit rates double. And smokers who take advantage of medications and also get counseling from the Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW are four times more likely to quit.

Research shows most parents know smoking is bad for their health and the health of their families, but most don't know how to quit. About 80 percent of parents who smoke say they want a doctor's help, but many pediatricians and family practice providers are reluctant to offer it. This campaign will encourage providers throughout the state to do so.

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UW-CTRI is nationally recognized for its leadership in reducing the burden of illness and death from tobacco use. Part of the UW School of Medicine and Public Health, UW-CTRI research programs strive to improve tobacco dependence treatment and help people quit.

