



**Department of Health
and Mental Hygiene**

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH
Commissioner

Dear Dental Professional:

Tobacco use kills an estimated 12,000 New Yorkers a year—and many more suffer daily from tobacco-related illnesses. More than two-thirds of New York City smokers try to quit every year.

Smokers experience higher rates of oral conditions that can complicate dental care, including periodontal disease and oral cancer. Quitting can decrease the risk of these complications, as well as prevent other debilitations and life-threatening diseases.

With proper counseling and the appropriate use of nicotine replacement and other pharmacotherapies, including combination regimens, long-term quit rates rise as high as 20 or 30 percent. However, nationally, only 20 percent of medical patients receive counseling and 8 percent are prescribed a medication.

As a health care professional, you are a powerful motivator to help all patients quit smoking regardless of how much, or little, they smoke. The New York City Health Department and the New York State Dental Association urge you to take these actions:

- Assess smoking status and readiness to quit at every visit.
- Develop a treatment plan that includes counseling, pharmacotherapy and follow-up.
- Document progress on the treatment plan at every visit.

We hope the clinical tools, provider resources and patient education materials in this Smoking and Oral Health Quit Kit support and amplify your efforts to help patients quit smoking for good. Your Health Department representative is visiting to discuss how to integrate these recommendations into your practice.

Working together, we can help thousands of New Yorkers become tobacco free and enjoy better oral health. Please join us.

Sincerely,

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH
Commissioner
New York City Department of Health

Richard Andolina, DDS
President
New York State Dental Association