

Health professionals urged to join fight against tobacco

Submitted by: Kestrel Worldcom

Tuesday, 24 May 2005

Doctors, dentists, nurses, and pharmacists should act as role models and set an example for their patients to follow, according to the European-wide "HELP – For a life without tobacco" campaign.

In a hard-hitting statement it calls on all health professionals to give up smoking themselves and to lobby the appropriate national and international bodies to fund anti-smoking legislation.

The recommendations tie in with the World Health Organisations' World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) on May 31, which encourages the professional bodies of all health workers to adopt smoking cessation as a major issue.

The document, produced in conjunction with the European Network for Smoking Prevention (ENSP), highlights a number of initiatives across Europe and encourages European Union member states to learn from each other and adopt a consistent approach in their smoking prevention efforts.

Ben Youdan, Chief Executive of No Smoking Day and a member of the ENSP, said, "The fact that WNTD is being launched in the UK this year is an excellent opportunity for us to reinforce the role that our health professionals play in smoking cessation. UK health professionals are world leaders in terms of helping smokers who want to stop. Trained advisors offer free support through NHS stop smoking services across the country, increasing users chances of quitting by up to four times."

To obtain a copy of the article please contact Niall Dologhan on 020 8543 2299 or at n.dologhan@kestrelcomms.co.uk.

For more information on WNTD and activities in the UK then please visit the following Department of Health website. It will feature a live webcast at 16.00 GMT on the 31st May:
http://events.simplywebcast.com/launch/events_launcher.asp?event=doh_no_tobacco_day_2005

The European Community is actively developing a complete anti-smoking policy. You can find out more on the following two websites: www.help-eu.com and http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/Tobacco/tobacco_en.htm

-ENDS-

Editor's notes:

- "HELP" is the second major EU-wide anti-smoking campaign run by the Commission. The campaign consists of a roadshow and public relations campaign, an advertising campaign and a website with help on how to quit.

- The European Commission has earmarked €72 million for the new campaign between now and 2008. Adolescents (15 to 18 year olds) and young adults (18 to 30 years olds) will be the main target groups.

· A consortium of health experts and media companies has devised the “HELP” campaign. The media companies delivering the campaign are working in partnership with the NGOs and public health bodies brought together by the European Network for Smoking Prevention (ENSP).

· At the outset of the campaign Markos Kyprianou, the European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection, said: “The sickness and death caused by smoking costs EU countries €100 billion a year. Prevention and information campaigns like “HELP” are an investment in a healthier and more prosperous future for our citizens. As well as promoting tobacco-free lifestyles to young people, the campaign will also highlight the dangers of passive smoking and support the trend towards tobacco-free public places.”

He continued: “Eight out of ten smokers start in their teenage years. Once hooked, it is a habit that takes many of them to an early grave. Every year, 650,000 EU citizens die from tobacco related disease. I am determined to do everything I can to stop young people taking up smoking, and to help young smokers kick the habit before it ruins their health. I want to see a major shift in our society, where being smoke-free becomes the norm and the smoke-addicted are a dwindling minority. If all EU countries followed the lead of Ireland, Italy and Malta and banned smoking in public places it would go a long way to achieving this.”

For further press information please contact:

Niall Dolohan or Naomi van Moppes on 020 8543 2299 or at n.dolohan@kestrelcomms.co.uk