

## **Penn *Quit for Health* Seeks Smokers For Free Smoking Cessation Program**

(Philadelphia, PA) To learn whether certain stop-smoking treatments can be tailored to a person's genetic makeup, researchers at the University of Pennsylvania Cancer Center are studying smokers' responses to two commonly prescribed pharmaceutical aids. Smokers ages 18-65 who are committed to quitting are currently being enrolled in a free research program known as *Quit for Health*. Eligible participants will receive free nicotine replacement therapy – either the nicotine patch or nicotine nasal spray – and attend seven group-counseling sessions that employ the latest and most effective techniques for quitting smoking.

“By increasing our understanding of the role of genetic factors in tobacco use and dependence, we hope to discover better ways to prevent smoking and to help people quit,” said **Caryn Lerman, Ph.D.**, primary investigator of the study, Associate Director for Cancer Control and Population Science at the **University of Pennsylvania Cancer Center**, and Director of the Tobacco Research Program at the **Abramson Family Cancer Research Institute**.

Almost 24 percent of Philadelphia adults were cigarette smokers in 2000, according to the latest figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Of these adults, over 48 percent reported having tried to quit smoking for at least one day in the last year. Previous research has shown that a significant percentage of those who smoke a pack or more a day report failure in trying to quit or cut back. Those who are able to quit usually require several attempts.

Research indicates that smokers who use medications in addition to counseling can double or triple their chances for successfully quitting.

In addition to free treatment, all participants in the *Quit for Health* program will be required to have a simple medical screening, complete questionnaires about their background and smoking habit, and participate in three brief telephone surveys during the year after their treatment ends.

Smokers who have made the commitment to quit can call 1-877-513-QUIT or visit [www.med.upenn.edu/ttunc](http://www.med.upenn.edu/ttunc) for more information.

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**Editor's Note:** You may also find this news release online at [www.uphs.upenn.edu/news](http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/news).

*The **Quit for Health** research program is sponsored by the University of Pennsylvania/Georgetown University Transdisciplinary Tobacco Use Research Center (TTURC). Funded by the National Institutes of Health, the TTURC's mission is to obtain a more complete understanding of the role specific genetic factors and bio-behavioral mechanisms play in promoting tobacco use, and to apply this knowledge toward prevention, treatment, and reduction of harmful tobacco exposure.*