28 May, 2013

Set the date for better health

Smokers are being encouraged to set a quit smoking date for this year’s World No Tobacco Day (31 May).

The acting director of Sydney Local Health District’s Health Promotion Service, Mandy Williams, said the World Health Organisation’s annual day was a positive opportunity to encourage smokers to set an “attempt to quit” date.

“Smokers that have attempted to quit in the past but returned to smoking are not alone. Many smokers find it difficult to quit smoking, however research shows that the more quit attempts you make, the greater your chance of quitting for good,” Ms Williams said.

“Some smokers may think that the damage to their body has already been done and there is no benefit in quitting. However, the physical benefits begin as early as the first 24 hours after your last cigarette.

“Once you quit for good you will get a real sense of achievement and your health and well-being will immediately start to improve,” Ms Williams said.

There are a range of options available to help smokers quit:

- Use nicotine replacement therapy, such as patches and gum to help ease withdrawal symptoms. Talk to your general practitioner about subsidised nicotine patches that are now available on prescription at affordable prices under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme;
- Talk to your general practitioner or pharmacist about other forms of nicotine replacement and prescription only medications that are available;
- Talk to a trained counsellor at the Quitline who can provide advice and discuss what you can expect during your quit attempt. You can contact the Quitline on 13 7848 and the multicultural Quitlines, Arabic 1300 7848 03, Chinese 1300 7848 36, Greek 1300 7848 59, Italian 1300 7848 61 and Vietnamese 1300 7848 65;
- You can also visit the Quit website www.icanquit.com.au which provides up-to-date information and personalised quitting advice; and
- Free cessation counselling is available at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and Croydon Community Health Centre. These services provide information about quit smoking strategies and support clients to develop a quit smoking plan, manage cravings and preventing relapse. Call the intake line on 9378 1306 for more information.

For more information, or to interview Mandy Williams, please contact Caline Haddad on 9515 9606 or caline.haddad@ss wahs.nsw.gov.au
About World No Tobacco Day

The World No Tobacco Day theme for 2013 is ‘Ban tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship’ which aims to raise awareness of the lack of comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship despite evidence showing that such bans lead to reductions in the numbers of people starting and continuing smoking.