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Pediatricians Help Parents CEASE Smoking

National program aims to help parents quit smoking where they may least expect it – in the pediatrician’s office

BOSTON – Parents may soon find themselves the object of their pediatrician’s attention, thanks to a program being introduced to pediatric offices across the country. The program, Clinical Effort Against Secondhand Smoke Exposure (CEASE), aims to teach pediatricians to help parents quit smoking and establish and enforce no-smoking rules in the home and car. CEASE is the result of 10 years of research, led by Jonathan Winickoff, MD, MPH, of the MassGeneral Hospital *for Children*.

“The goals of this program are to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure of children and to give every parent the best possible chance of quitting smoke,” says Winickoff, who is the Chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Tobacco Consortium and an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School. “Even though parents may not be ready to quit smoking, it’s important to offer help. Offering help opens the door for a conversation about quitting smoking, either now, or during a future visit.”

More than thirty percent of children are exposed to secondhand smoke at home. Winickoff's study, which appears in the August 1 *Journal of Pediatrics*, found that in child healthcare settings, helping parents to quit smoking benefited the entire family. Quitting smoking adds an average of seven years to a parent's life, improves the health of all of the household members, eliminates the majority of secondhand smoke exposure of the children, helps reduce a pregnant mother's risk of delivering a low birth weight and premature babies, eliminates the greatest cause of house fire mortality, improves the financial resources of the family, and decreases the chances that teens will pick up the habit.

“Secondhand tobacco smoke kills three times more children than all childhood cancers combined,” says Winickoff. “While laws protect adults in the workplace, no laws protect children in their own homes and cars.”

Finding opportunities to address smoking cessation with parents is a challenge. Parents often neglect their own health and some even lack health insurance or a primary care clinician. Parents who smoke often see their child's health care clinician more frequently than their own, which is why CEASE provides the perfect opportunity to address smoking with all family members. In addition to guidance from the pediatrician and clinical team, some of the benefits of the program include linking parents to free, state quit lines, getting nicotine replacement medications such as the patch or gum, as well as providing them with written materials to help them be successful in quitting.

“This program is now available for everyone to use, and the science behind it is compelling,” says Winickoff. “I hope that every child healthcare office in the country adopts the program so that every family can become tobacco-free.”

To find out more about the program, visit <http://www.massgeneral.org/ceasetobacco/>. The CEASE program is partnered with the American Academy of Pediatrics Julius B. Richmond Center of Excellence and the American Academy of Pediatrics Pediatric Research in Office Settings (PROS) network.

About the Massachusetts General Hospital

Founded in 1811, the MGH is the third oldest general hospital in the United States and the oldest and largest in New England. The 900-bed medical center offers sophisticated diagnostic and therapeutic care in virtually every specialty and subspecialty of medicine and surgery. Each year the MGH admits more than 46,000 inpatients and handles nearly 1.5 million outpatient visits at its main campus and health centers. Its Emergency Department records nearly 80,000 visits annually. The surgical staff performs more than 35,000 operations and the MGH Vincent Obstetrics Service delivers more than 3,500 babies each year. The MGH conducts the largest hospital-based research program in the country, with an annual research budget of more than \$500 million. It is the oldest and largest teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School, where nearly all MGH staff physicians serve on the faculty. The MGH is consistently ranked among the nation's top hospitals by *US News and World Report*.

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