

Emotional ads from national campaign hit home

Dramatic television commercials that show the harms caused by smoking have been airing across the United States and in Indiana in the last several months. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) is continuing its national tobacco education campaign – “Tips from Former Smokers,” www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips – with new ads and several of the emotional ads seen in previous campaigns. The PSAs underscore the immediate and long-term damage smoking can do to the body.

Two of the recent ads feature Terrie, who took part in previous Tips campaigns. In high school, Terrie was a cheerleader who competed on the North Carolina cheer circuit. She started smoking in social settings; before long, she was smoking up to two packs of cigarettes a day. In 2001, at age 40, cancer dramatically changed life for Terrie and her family. Doctors found that she had oral and throat cancer caused by her smoking.

Terrie’s new ads were filmed shortly before she passed away. In these ads, Terrie continues to urge smokers to quit. Terrie was one of several remarkable people who shared their stories as part of the Tips campaign.



Miranda H. Spitznagle
Director, Tobacco Prevention
& Cessation Commission
Indiana Department
of Health
Indianapolis, Ind.
mspitznagle@isdh.IN.gov

Ads make hidden suffering visible

Sharing experiences of cancer, a heart attack or life after losing a leg is a powerful way to communicate the risks of smoking and the harsh reality of the health problems that can occur. Smoking causes a wide variety of severe health problems, but these illnesses can be nearly invisible to smokers in

their day-to-day lives. Statistics show that Americans pay a high price in illnesses and deaths due to tobacco use.

Cigarette smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke cause more than 480,000 deaths a year in the United States. They are also among the main causes of early disability.

For every person who dies from smoking, another 20 suffer from illnesses related to smoking. These illnesses include asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a group of lung diseases that include emphysema and chronic bronchitis. COPD makes it hard to breathe and can lead to an early death. Smoking can also make other health conditions – such as diabetes – much worse.

In Indiana, more than 9,700 tobacco-related deaths occur each year – or approximately one per hour. Over 194,000 Hoosiers are battling a chronic health condition caused by their smoking, impacting tens of thousands of families throughout the state.

Smoking rates *have* declined since the first Surgeon General’s report on smoking in 1964 found a link to cancer, but the decline has leveled off in recent years. As Dr. Tim McAfee, director of CDC’s Office on Smoking & Health said, “It has been challenging to make progress in getting people to quit smoking in the last several years.”

CDC launched the first “Tips from Former Smokers” campaign in 2012 to further lower smoking rates, save lives and prevent the kind of suffering that Terrie and her family endured for 13 years. Tips campaigns in 2013 and 2014 expanded on the success of the first campaign. The 2012 effort inspired an estimated 1.6 million Americans to quit smoking.

All of the people featured in the Tips campaigns hope their stories will help other smokers quit. As one participant put it, “Make a list. Put the people you love at the top. Put down your eyes, your legs, your kidneys, and your heart. Now cross off all the things you’re okay with losing because you’d rather smoke.”

One in every three cancer deaths caused by smoking

If nobody smoked, one of every three cancer deaths in the United States would not occur. Smoking can cause cancer and then block your body from fighting it. Poisons in cigarette smoke can weaken the body’s immune system, making it harder to kill cancer cells. When this happens, cancer cells keep growing unabated.

Poisons in tobacco smoke can damage or change a cell’s DNA. DNA is the cell’s “instruction manual” that controls a cell’s normal growth and function. When DNA is damaged, a cell can begin growing out of control and create a cancer tumor.

Doctors have known for years that smoking causes most lung cancer. Nearly nine out of 10 men who die from lung cancer are smokers. And about 3,000 nonsmokers die each year from lung cancer caused by secondhand smoke.

Smoking can cause cancer almost anywhere in your body, including the mouth, nose, throat, larynx, trachea, esophagus, lungs, stomach, pancreas, kidneys and ureters, bladder, cervix, bone marrow and blood.

Smokeless tobacco also causes cancer, including cancers of the esophagus, mouth, throat and pancreas. Quitting smoking lowers the risks for cancers. Within five years of quitting, your chance of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus and bladder is cut in half. Ten years

after you quit smoking, your risk of dying from lung cancer drops by half.

Quitting smoking is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health. Quitting smoking is hard. Tobacco use is an addiction, but there are people that can help. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit www.QuitNowIndiana.com. Learn about how a “quit coach” from the Indiana Tobacco Quitline can help you or a loved one be tobacco free.

For more information about the Tips campaign and resources for quitting smoking, visit CDC.gov/tips. For help quitting, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW. 🍷

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No tanks – how I quit smoking

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. Well, my doctor painted a doozy for me!

I had smoked regularly since I was 16. In the fall of 2007, I had a physical, and because I was suffering physical symptoms from my smoking, my doctor administered a pulmonary test. A couple weeks later, his assistant called to tell me the results were in. She wouldn’t give them to me over the phone – the doctor wanted to see me in person.

When I arrived for the appointment, he told me the test revealed my lung capacity was at 40 percent. “Uh oh,” I thought, but figured I could still get around pretty well. Then he threw in the kicker – “If you don’t quit smoking now, you’ll be dragging an oxygen tank around behind you.” That statement conjured up a visual I could not ignore.

I never had much pity for the folks with tanks because I figured they brought it on themselves. And I had no pity whatsoever for the ones who continued to smoke even after being consigned to the tank. They were just plain stupid. But here I was, faced with the vision of being saddled with that most demeaning of accoutrements.

I couldn’t stand the thought of it. My doctor had previously mentioned that he had experienced good outcomes with Chantix. Determined not to have a hose up my nose, I said, “Bring it on.” I took it for eight weeks and experienced the two most common side



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effects – nausea and crazy dreams. I could get around the nausea by eating a full meal before taking it, but after eight weeks I had had enough. The dreams were another story. I looked forward to them. I was viewing never-before-seen, full-length feature films every night for free! All in all, the Chantix was worth it, and the best part was that I actually quit smoking.

I’ll be celebrating seven years tobacco free this November. My lung function has been restored, and I no longer wake up at night feeling like I’m suffocating. Plus I don’t stink like cigarettes (and yes, my smoking friends, you *do* stink like cigarettes). I learned that with the proper motivation, even a 33-year smoker like me could quit. *So can you.* 🍷



Daniel P. McNerny, Indianapolis, is a partner in the environmental law group at Bose McKinney & Evans LLP.