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Improve your health for 2007! January is the time of year individuals think about setting New Year's resolutions. An important resolution that each tobacco user should make is to stop using tobacco. Many previous smokers and spit tobacco users have been successful because they set a date to quit.

Tobacco users find their New Year's resolutions work when they prepare and use their support system. Quitting smoking is difficult to do. If quitting was easy, many smokers who want to quit would have already become non-smokers. With an estimated 1.2 million adult smokers in Indiana, there are many people who need help quitting. Despite the number of Hoosier smokers, almost half tried to quit smoking during the past year based on the most current data available. "Tried to quit," are the important words on which to concentrate.

Getting help in quitting is necessary many times. It is also important for smokers, health care providers, and family members to recognize that stopping an addiction requires help. Worksites, community smoking cessation services, and health insurance programs which support smoking cessation products give tobacco users the help they need. An important source of support is the private physician's office when patients who smoke present themselves with other health issues. Patients many times will quit when a physician takes the time to write a prescription to quit. Another source of help can be found at INShape Indiana at www.INShape.IN.gov

In addition to smokers resolving to quit in 2007, communities who have not gone "smokefree" should also resolve to seek smokefree environments for their communities, especially in work places, restaurants, and settings where people gather as a community. Strong public health policy that supports no smoking environments should be on their 2007 agenda. For more information on the steps to take to create a smokefree community, contact the Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Agency at www.itpc.in.gov

Of course, the best resolution for all non-smokers, especially young children, teens, and young adults is to not start smoking or using any type of tobacco product. Once the habit forms and the addiction takes over, the resolution to quit is much more difficult to accomplish. Parents, health care providers, school leaders, and communities all play a part in preventing tobacco use initiation, particularly by youth. Young Hoosiers will contribute much more to Indiana's economic success when they are healthy.

The year 2007 can be a healthier year for all when Hoosiers resolve to quit tobacco use, communities resolve to establish tobacco free environments, and non-smokers, especially youth, resolve to not start using tobacco products. By the year 2008, Indiana will be a healthier state in which to work, play, and raise a family when we all resolve to prevent tobacco use in 2007.

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The Indiana State Department of Health supports Indiana's economic prosperity and quality of life by promoting, protecting and providing for the health of Hoosiers in their communities.