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ACROSS OUR DESKS TO YOURS

Tobacco alternatives exposed

By Jennifer Hoffman and Nicole Smith

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GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT NOV. 18TH

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Since the 1950's, the tobacco industry has been attempting to increase sales by offering alternative tobacco products for smokers that are concerned about their health. Past research indicated that these products were not "safer" alternatives. In light of proposed increased tobacco industry regulation legislation, smoke-free communities and increased monitoring, due to the Master Tobacco Settlement, the tobacco industry is again focusing marketing attempts on alternative tobacco products.

There are several different types of products being marketed as safe alternatives, such as "safer" cigarettes, smokeless tobacco and tobacco lozenges. The cigarette options either burn the tobacco differently, therefore creating less toxins, or by design have less toxins. Smokeless tobacco is being marketed as an alternative to avoid health risks associated with inhaled tobacco. In Indiana, we have seen a statistically significant increase in the number of 7th grade students reporting monthly smokeless tobacco use. The tobacco lozenge, which is compressed tobacco, provides similar nicotine levels as traditional tobacco products. These lozenges are being marketed to people who are in an environment preventing them from smoking, such as an

airplane or smoke-free workplace.

Public health tobacco researchers, including the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute, have reported several negative implications to the marketing of tobacco alternatives including:

- Tobacco use initiation may increase
- Tobacco use cessation may decrease
- Perceived risk of disease diminished by switching to smokeless tobacco
- Increased inhalation due to decreased nicotine levels
- Misguided public awareness of the hazards of tobacco use

Tobacco use initiation increases and cessation decreases may be due to the individual's belief that these safer products have reduced health hazards. Consumers may believe it is safe to use these products, even though research shows there is exposure to high levels of glass inhalation, carbon monoxide and other toxins.

The National Cancer Institute has stated there is no convincing evidence that changes in past cigarette designs have resulted in a significant decrease in the diseases caused by smoking. As early as 1981, the Surgeon General's Report established that the "safer" tobacco products

November Events

November 5th

- Fall 2004 ATOD/CYFAR training workshop at Purdue University's Stewart Center, email Janelle Musch jmusch@purdue.edu or call 1-765-496-6123

November 6th-10th

- American Public Health Association meeting in Washington, D. C., for more information, visit: www.apha.org/meetings/

November 15th-16th

- 2004 Kids Count in Indiana Conference at the Indiana Convention Center, for more information, visit: [www.iyi.org/pdf/](http://www.iyi.org/pdf/conf_04_rfp.pdf)

[conf_04_rfp.pdf](#)

November 16th

- Building Your Fundraising Program in Warsaw, Indiana. Sally Benson, CFRE will present For more information, visit: www.iyi.org/trainings_conferences/pdg_conf_list.asp. The cost is \$39.

For a complete list of events, visit:
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ACROSS OUR DESKS TO YOURS

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Another success for Clark County

By Jennifer Kelley, M.P.H., C.H.E.S.

Jeffersonville – Fall 2004's Southern Indiana Drug Prevention Conference, "Gateway Drugs," sponsored by the Grassroots Prevention Coalition of Clark County, a project of the Community Action of Southern Indiana, Inc., the Clark County Youth Coalition (the Governor's Commission for a Drug Free Indiana), Metro United Way of Clark County, FSSA/DMHA and OJP/OJJDP attracted many prevention and treatment professionals from the states of Indiana and Kentucky.

The focus of this year's conference was two of the 'gateway' drugs, alcohol and marijuana. Conference participants were treated to topics such as, "Risks Associated with Youth's Use of Marijuana", "If You Change Your Mind: The Effects of Adolescent ATOD use on the Developing Brain", and the very popular "Who's Growing It? Who's Selling It? What's the Real Scoop?". Dr. Burns M. Brady, Medical Director of the Kentucky Physicians Health Foundation, served as the Keynote speaker delivering a powerful message about Marijuana and its effects during his address, "Marijuana: Up In Smoke".

With one hundred and one conference goers, the

day was filled with much learning and the sharing of ideas. The collective group was comprised of professionals from public schools, youth serving agencies, law enforcement, hospitals, and other community organizations from across the state of Indiana and parts of Kentucky. Rebecca Smith, Program Director of the Grassroots Prevention Coalition of Clark County and organizer of the conference, commented that she was "very pleased with the turnout and participation." "Workshops," she added, "were well attended and feedback has been extremely positive." The 2004 Southern Indiana Drug Prevention Conference "Gateway Drugs" brought participants new developments in the field and also continuing education.

Prevention and treatment professionals will undoubtedly be looking forward to the next conference. Currently no topic has been decided upon said Rebecca Smith, but she does anticipate a fall 2005 conference. The Grassroots Prevention Coalition of Clark County & Community Action of Southern Indiana can be reached at 812-288-6451, ext. 129.

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being produced could introduce new risks to smokers through their design, filtering mechanisms, tobacco ingredients or additives. The Surgeon General further reported that the popularity of filtered and low – tar cigarettes are not a viable strategy for reducing the hazards of smoking, but merely an uninformed public's response to concerns about the health risks of tobacco use.

Please work to inform your community about the harmful effects of smoking, and the misdirection "safer" cigarettes are promising.

Citations:

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