



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **NEW YORK STATE TOBACCO EDUCATION TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATION IS ACCEPTED BY U.S. MEDICAL LICENSING BOARD**

More tobacco dependence and treatment content to be on physician exams in 2014

ALBANY, NY- A Tobacco Education Task Force in New York State has received approval from the United States Medical Licensing Board (USLME) for more comprehensive tobacco dependence and treatment content to be included in future physician examinations beginning in 2014. This change in content will result in physicians entering medical practice better educated in the evidence-based methods of treating tobacco use and dependence and more confident utilizing the recommended method of helping their patients quit smoking.

“This is a giant step forward and will dramatically increase the number of smokers who receive evidence-based treatment,” said Dr. Michael Fiore, Chair of the 1996, 2000, and 2008 U.S. Public Health Service Clinical Practice Guideline *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence*.

Despite the fact that tobacco dependence is a chronic disease and smoking is the number one cause of preventable death, killing 443,000 people each year in the U.S., there is no consistent national curricular model for medical schools to teach the best practice method of treating tobacco dependence. The national adult smoking rate as of 2011 was 19%, representing a steady decline from 21.6% in 2003. Despite this improvement, there are several disparate groups that continue to smoke at significantly higher rates, ranging from 25.5% to 29%. These populations include those with: low income, low educational attainment and poor mental health. To effectively help these patients quit smoking, physicians must receive tobacco dependence education in medical school to prepare them in the evidence-based model for treatment.

“Seventy percent of all smokers are seen by a doctor each year and this gives physicians an opportunity to discuss smoking and its overall health consequences,” said Lawrence Smith, MD, executive vice president and physician in chief at the North Shore-LIJ Health System and Dean of the Hofstra North Shore-LIJ School of Medicine. “Research shows that even a brief conversation with a physician can be an effective smoking intervention, especially if a doctor gives information about the most effective ways to quit and is supportive in the quitting process.”

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Healthcare providers are extremely influential with their patients when talking about quitting smoking and assisting them with the process. Having a physician educated in the best-practice model for tobacco dependence treatment is essential to reaching the adult population that continues to smoke at higher than the national rate. Adding more tobacco dependence and treatment content on the exams will dramatically change how future physicians are educated in the United States.

The United States Medical Licensing Examination ® (USMLE®) is a three-step examination for medical licensure in the United States and is sponsored by the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) and the National Board of Medical Examiners® (NBME®). The USMLE assesses a physician's ability to apply knowledge, concepts, and principles, and to demonstrate fundamental patient-centered skills, that are important in health and disease and that constitute the basis of safe and effective patient care.

The USMLE program invites physicians and educators with expertise in tobacco dependence treatment to be considered for participation in a USMLE test committee by visiting <https://www2.nbme.org/nominees/default.aspx> (User ID = nominees [lower case]; Password = Submission001).

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*The Tobacco Education Task Force included representatives from six New York State Cessation Centers including: The Center for Smoking Cessation at Seton Health St. Peter's Health Partners, Albany; North Shore-LIJ Center for Tobacco Control Nassau and Suffolk Counties; Tobacco Cessation Center at St. Joseph's Hospital, Syracuse; Tobacco Cessation Center of Northern NY Carthage Area Hospital; POW'R Cessation Center, White Plains; and UHS/Team ACT Cessation Center Johnson City. New York State Cessation Centers work with health care organizations and providers to implement systems to screen patients for tobacco use and prompt providers to offer advice and assistance to quit. The Cessation Centers are funded by the New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Tobacco Control.*