

Statement on Expanding Access to Smoking Cessation Programs *June 27, 2000*

Today the Surgeon General is releasing updated guidelines, compiled by top public and private sector experts, to help more people overcome their tobacco addiction and to give health care professionals an important tool to help their patients quit using tobacco products. Tobacco addiction and related health disorders pose one of the greatest public health threats facing our Nation today. Over 400,000 Americans die every year from tobacco related diseases—more than AIDS, illegal drugs, alcohol, fires, car accidents, murders, and suicides, combined.

While more than 25 percent of U.S. adults smoke, studies show that 70 percent of them would like to quit. To build on the new guidelines and progress we have already made to help Federal personnel stop smoking, today I am issuing an Executive memorandum directing all Federal departments and agencies to: encourage their employees to stop, or never start, smoking;

provide information on proven smoking cessation treatments and practices; and describe assistance they can provide to help their personnel quit smoking. I am also directing the agencies to review their current tobacco cessation programs using the updated guidelines, and to report on their effectiveness and opportunities for enhancement to the Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

Finally, I urge Congress to enact my budget proposal to ensure that every State Medicaid program covers both prescription and non-prescription smoking cessation drugs—helping millions of low-income Americans gain access to medical treatments that would help them break their addiction to tobacco.

NOTE: This statement was embargoed for release until 4 p.m.

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Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Expanding Access to Smoking Cessation Programs

Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that smoking-related diseases claim more than 400,000 lives annually and cost the United States tens of billions of dollars in medical expenses and lost productivity. Smoking-related diseases devastate our families and communities by contributing to the premature deaths of our husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, siblings, and close friends. As we now know, the vast majority of adult smokers begin smoking as children, and most become addicted to nicotine. Research also shows that more than 70 percent of adult smokers would like to quit smoking.

On August 9, 1997, I issued Executive Order 13058, establishing a smoke-free environment for the more than 1.8 million civilian Federal

employees and members of the public visiting or using Federal facilities. In that order, I encouraged agencies to establish programs to help employees stop smoking. And in 1998, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) conducted a survey to determine what steps agencies had taken to help employees stop smoking. The results of that survey showed that a majority of those who responded had smoking cessation programs in place at the worksite or were planning to initiate them.

For example, due to our efforts, 1.4 million members of the armed forces and their families have benefited from Department of Defense initiatives that have provided them with smoke free workplaces and readily accessible smoking cessation programs. The Postal Service's more than 800,000 employees and their customers have enjoyed smoke free environments since 1993.

Today, the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Public Health Service released new tobacco cessation guidelines that reflect the