

## The Health Hazards of Smoking

The U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Carmona has released a new comprehensive report on smoking and health, revealing for the first time that smoking causes diseases in nearly every organ of the body. Published 40 years after the surgeon general's first report on smoking, which concluded that smoking was a definite cause of lung cancer, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory disease, this newest report finds that cigarette smoking is conclusively linked to diseases such as leukemia, cataracts, pneumonia and cancers of the cervix, kidney, pancreas and stomach, acute myeloid leukemia, abdominal aortic aneurysm and periodontitis.

According to the report, smoking kills an estimated 440,000 Americans each year. On average, men who smoke cut their lives short by 13.2 years, and female smokers lose 14.5 years. The economic toll exceeds \$157 billion each year in the U.S., \$75 billion in direct medical costs and \$82 billion in lost productivity.

The report concludes that smoking reduces the overall health of smokers, contributing to such conditions as hip fractures, complications from diabetes, increased wound infections following surgery, and a wide range of reproductive complications.

Another major conclusion, consistent with recent findings of other scientific studies, is that smoking so-called low-tar or low-nicotine cigarettes does not offer a health benefit over smoking regular cigarettes.

“There is no safe cigarette, whether it is called “light, ultra-light” or any other name,” Dr. Carmona said. “The science is clear: The only way to avoid the health hazards of smoking is to quit completely or to never start smoking.”

The report concludes that quitting smoking has immediate and long-term benefits, reducing risks for diseases caused by smoking and improving health in general. Among these health improvements are improved circulation, a drop in heart rate, and reduced risk of heart attack, lung cancer and stroke. It is never too late to quit !



It is to every employer's advantage to institute a smoking cessation program in the workplace. The Center for Disease Control estimates that each adult smoker costs employers \$3,400 per year in lost productivity and excess medical expenditures.

Studies have shown that the following steps will help a person quit and quit for good. They will have the best chance of quitting if they use them together.

- Get Ready
- Get Support
- Learn new skills and behaviors.
- Get medication and use it correctly.
- Be prepared for relapse or difficult situations

For detailed information on quitting smoking go to <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit/canquit.htm>.

There are also numerous support groups that meet regularly to aid people in the fight to stop smoking. The American Cancer Society has listing of groups available in the local community.

(Source: Surgeon General 2004)



## Is “In House Modified Duty” right for you?

How can using HealthFirst “In House Modified Duty Program” save our company money? One company, US Foodservice, asked this question. They decided to try the program by sending employees who were placed on modified duty by the physician.

Carols Cassias, Director of Risk Management at US Foodservice said, “The modified work program has proven to be very successful in reducing our lost time injuries. The program is a medically supervised program that allows our associates to attend medical appointments in a controlled environment that is conducive to their recovery. HealthFirst has assisted in reducing our recordable accidents by 57% and lost time injuries by 80%.”

What does this mean to US Foodservice and other companies using the program? It means they are reducing the cost of their Workers’ Comp injuries. By having fewer lost time injuries, they are keeping their insurance premiums lower. This program is a win-win for the employer and the employee. The employer saves money on case cost and premiums and the employee learns how their bodies heal and how to prevent injuries from happening again. Employees in the program spend 8 hours a day at our facility watching safety videos, reading health information booklets, exercising and work hardening.

To find out more information about our In House Modified Duty Program, please visit our website at [www.healthfirstmedical.net](http://www.healthfirstmedical.net). You may also contact your marketing representative to schedule a tour at 562-926-3440 or 562-949-9328.



**MEDICAL GROUP, Inc.**

13440 E. Imperial Hwy.  
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670

## Frequently Asked Questions About MPNs

**Q:** Can an insured-employer apply to be a MPN?

**A:** No. A workers’ compensation insurance carrier, self-insured employer, Joint Powers Authority, or the State of California MAY choose to create an MPN. There is not a requirement to do so. Each eligible payer entity may decide for its own organization if it wants to establish and use an MPN for their employees’ occupational medical care.

**Q:** Can we make changes to the employee notification materials?

**A:** Each applicant may modify or customize the employee notification material to fit their company or their workforce. However, be very careful that you do NOT make changes to language or meaning that is set forth in the statute or regulations.

If you have questions about whether or not HealthFirst Medical is a participating member of the MPN that your insurance carrier has selected for your use, please give your marketing representative a call and he/she will check for you. HealthFirst Medical is a participant of all the major MPNs that have been approved thus far by the Department of Workers Compensation.

Source: CA Dept. of Workers’ Compensation

### Changes in Company Information?

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance Carrier: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_