

**For immediate release**  
**7 April 2009**

### **Timely reminder on smoking**

World No Tobacco Day on May 31 is the perfect time to remind staff and patients of Gold Coast Health Service District (GCHSD) facilities they cannot smoke on the premises.

GCHSD Acting Chief Executive Officer, Ms Naomi Dwyer said the district had a responsibility to inform staff and patients about smoking management.

“As a health service, we have an inherent responsibility to inform staff and patients and visitors that smoking is not permitted at any of our facilities,” Ms Dwyer said.

Protective Services Officers working at the facilities have received additional training in conflict resolution as part of the Smoking Management campaign, and are now authorised to issue fines.

GCHSD Protective Services Manager Mr Scott Bryson said enforcement of the restrictions would be a positive and consultative process which aimed to educate staff and patients on alternative options such as Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT).

“Smoking at any Gold Coast Health Service District facility or on Queensland Health property is an offence under law, with a maximum penalty of \$1000,” Mr Bryson said.

“Cautioning will always come first, but our officers are authorised to issue fines to repeat offenders.”

Tobacco smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and illness in Queensland, increasing the risk of lung cancer, cardiovascular disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease amongst others.

The total smoking-related financial burden on the Queensland community is estimated at \$2.2 billion annually, which includes health care costs, loss of productivity through sickness and absenteeism, and the impact of premature death.

Each year in Queensland, an estimated 3,400 die from illnesses caused by their smoking; one in two people who start smoking as teenagers will eventually die from tobacco related diseases.

Smoking costs the health system dearly, with 168,115 hospital bed days at a cost of \$137.8 million directly attributable to smoking-related conditions each year.

Queensland Health offers free NRT for all inpatients who smoke to help manage their nicotine withdrawal during their hospital stay. Staff are also supported through the ‘Quit smoking for life’ program.

Mental Health involuntary inpatients unwilling to accept NRT will have a supervised, designated area in which to smoke.

World No Tobacco Day was created by the World Health Organization in 1987, drawing global attention to the widespread prevalence of tobacco use and to its negative health effects.

Ends...

## **MEDIA ALERT**

- EVENT:** **SMOKING MANAGEMENT DISPLAY AND INFORMATION**  
Gold Coast Hospital will be hosting a smoking management display and related information from the 'Butt it & Bin it' and 'Quit' for life teams.
- WHO:** GCHSD Protective Services Officer Shelly Old  
Cancer Council Queensland Nurse of the Year Entrant Linda Brough  
Cancer Council Queensland Coordinator Rachel Hull
- WHEN:** Wednesday 8 April 2009
- TIME:** 1 pm
- WHERE:** Please meet in the Gold Coast Hospital main foyer for photo opportunity.

**For further information contact:**  
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