



Dear General Practitioner

**RE: Smoke Free WA Health System Policy: How General Practitioners can support patients**

From 1 January 2008 WA Health will be smoke-free. This means smoking will no longer be permitted anywhere on WA Health premises or grounds, including all public hospitals, mental health facilities and community health settings. The rationale for the new smoke free policy is for Occupational Health and Safety reasons, aimed at protecting patients, visitors and staff from the harmful effects of second hand smoke.

We are seeking the support of General Practitioners (GPs) and request that you discuss the impact of this policy with patients being referred to hospital who are smokers. All patients who smoke need to be reassured that they will be supported to manage their nicotine addiction whilst in a smoke-free environment through assessment and access to nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). Mental health service patients have a higher rate of heavy smoking and may need additional reassurance. It also presents an ideal opportunity to discuss with patients their desire to quit smoking.

Health care staff throughout WA will be trained in the delivery of nicotine dependence screening and withdrawal management, which includes providing brief intervention advice. Hospital staff will, where possible, screen and plan for nicotine management at pre-admission clinics. On admission, NRT will be offered to patients assessed and identified as requiring pharmacotherapies.

On discharge patients will be provided with information on community based smoking cessation services such as the Quitline and Fresh Start, and how to access nicotine replacement therapy in consultation with the GP or a community pharmacist.

Information brochures will be provided to patients at pre admission clinics and will be distributed to GP practices in near future.

Further information about the implementation of the WA Health smoke free policy for patients and health professionals is available at [www.health.wa.gov.au/smokefree](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/smokefree).

Yours sincerely,

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