

To offer the Tobacco Addiction Specialist credentialing program

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NAADAC, The Association for Addiction Professionals, has partnered with the University of Florida and Patient Support International to offer the Tobacco Addiction Specialist credentialing program.

Formally launched today, the program is an Internet-based, 85-hour training course that provides health care professionals with tested therapeutic techniques for addressing patients' tobacco addiction.

"This is a unique, first of its kind program that gives health care professionals the tools they need to effectively treat nicotine and tobacco addiction," said Roger A. Curtiss, president of NAADAC, which is the nation's largest membership organization for addiction professionals.

To obtain the certification, candidates must pass a 150-question written test and an oral examination. Expected to certify 1,000 counselors in its first six months, the program is based on the research of Murray Kelly, president of Patient Support International, and scientists at the University of Florida, led by Dr. Mark Gold.

"Tobacco addiction counseling is a growing field and this certificate will allow health care professionals to expand and strengthen their practices," said Shirley Beckett, NAADAC's education and certification administrator. "Employers and insurance companies are beginning to see the value of tobacco addiction treatment and the certificate demonstrates to them who is qualified to provide this important health care service."

Tobacco use causes more than 440,000 deaths and \$75.5 billion in excess medical costs in the United States each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"With more than 45 million Americans currently smoking, it is clear that most will need professional help to stop," Curtiss said. "The tobacco specialist credential is an important step in helping patients and reducing the toll addiction takes on society."

"We're launching the program today to take advantage of the increased public attention that

smoking and tobacco will receive this week."

Nov. 21 is the American Cancer Society's "Great American Smokeout" day, and NAADAC will promote the tobacco treatment training program at the 2002 National Conference on Tobacco or Health, Nov. 19-21, in San Francisco.

In addition to the tobacco certificate, NAADAC offers three levels of certification for addiction counselors, including master's level certification. NAADAC is developing training programs that will address gambling and criminal justice issues.

**MEDIA ADVISORY:** NAADAC representatives will be available for interview at the 2002 National Conference on Tobacco or Health, Nov. 19-21, in San Francisco, and throughout the country on Nov. 21 for the "Great American Smokeout."