

UGA College of Pharmacy helps smokers ‘beat the pack’

Athens, Ga. – The University of Georgia College of Pharmacy is supporting smokers and tobacco users with New Year’s resolutions to improve their health with a six-week Beat the Pack Tobacco Cessation Program on Thursdays, starting Jan. 25. The class will be held from 5:45-7:00 p.m. at the College of Pharmacy, located at 250 W. Green Street on the UGA campus. According to lead instructor Kay Brooks, an associate director in the College of Pharmacy’s Experience Programs, the class is free; however, “Attendees should be committed to participating.”

Despite the decline of cigarette smoking and tobacco use, statistics are still staggering. According to the Centers for Disease Control, tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States. Almost 40 million U.S. adults still smoke cigarettes, and about 4.7 million middle and high school students use at least one tobacco product, including e-cigarettes. Each year, almost half a million Americans die prematurely of smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke. Another 16 million live with a serious illness caused by smoking. Each year, the United States spends nearly \$170 billion on medical care to treat smoking-related disease in adults.

“Throughout the cessation course, we will provide attendees with the tools they need to quit their tobacco habit,” said Brooks. “The CDC reports that seven out of 10 smokers and tobacco chewers want to quit; they just don’t how to do so. While we can’t force attendees to quit using tobacco products, we hope we will lead them towards making that important health decision for themselves and their loved ones.”

Along with Brooks, trained pharmacy students will provide group programming and individualized coaching, while helping attendees develop a personalized “quit” plan. In addition, each session will focus on tobacco-use issues, such as health risks, reasons to quit, cessation aids, coping with the urges to use tobacco, handling relapses and maintenance.

The class size is limited. Persons interested in further information and registration for the Beat the Pack Cessation Program may contact the College of Pharmacy at 706-542-3893 or email monicaw@uga.edu.

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