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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
Monday, January 22, 2001

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**MASSACHUSETTS AND RHODE ISLAND**  
**JOIN FORCES TO COMBAT SMOKING**  
*Historic New Anti-smoking Media Campaign Launched*

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Rhode Island Department of Health today announced a new, historic collaborative tobacco education media campaign targeting smokers and children in Southeastern Massachusetts and in Rhode Island.

"Lung cancer knows no state boundaries," said Massachusetts Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Koh. "We're hopeful this agreement will be a model for collaboration among all the New England states to beat public health enemy number one...cigarette smoking."

"We must solve the problem of tobacco-related diseases," said Dr. Patricia A. Nolan, Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health. "Tobacco causes 2,000 unnecessary deaths each year in Rhode Island and costs over \$300 million - just in medical expenses. We have to do more with what we have to counter the well-financed effort by the industry to promote tobacco use. This partnership between our two states helps to reduce tobacco's toll by improving access to public health information and increasing opportunities to quit smoking."

The \$1.9 million program will produce new television and radio advertising to air on Fall River, New Bedford and Providence stations throughout the year and offer additional tobacco education programs. The goal of the program is to get smokers to quit and prevent kids from lighting up. By pooling resources, the states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island double the value of media campaigns and reach a far greater audience than if they ran separate campaigns.

"More than a third of the residents of Southeastern Massachusetts tune in to Rhode Island radio and television stations," said Dr. Koh, MDPH Commissioner. "It's crucial we reach this particular

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audience since the Fall River and New Bedford areas have some of the highest smoking rates in Massachusetts."

The media campaign this spring will feature ads targeting young people with a strong, consistent message about the dangers of smoking. These will be followed by a final series on the dangers of second hand smoke. The program will also work with health care professionals in Southeastern Massachusetts and in Rhode Island to encourage them to counsel their patients to quit.

The media education campaign also promotes use of a new website, [www.trytostop.org](http://www.trytostop.org) which provides interactive on line counseling. Each smoker to enroll progresses through six stages of quitting at their own pace by downloading an individualized quit plan.

Trytostop.org also features monthly medical articles authored by health and tobacco treatment experts, as well as a comprehensive listing of local tobacco treatment available to Massachusetts and Rhode Island residents. Quit tips and anecdotal stories on how others quit can also be found at this website. Quit Wizard is easily accessed through the [www.trytostop.org](http://www.trytostop.org) website. This site will advertise through radio ads this month and television ads in February. Internet banner advertising will be features on popular internet sites including AOL.com, Boston.com and Yahoo.com.

Arnold Worldwide and Geovision, a minority owned business advertising firm, were responsible for production of the media education campaign.

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