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## Health officials: Stop smoking, save money

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If health officials can't get through to smokers by warning about their well-being, they will now appeal to their bank accounts.

On April 1, the new Kentucky cigarette tax goes into effect and local health officials are estimating that it will cost the pack-a-day smoker around \$350 more a year.

Area hospitals are promoting a free smoking cessation program by pointing out the money savings that come with kicking the habit. The two sessions will incorporate the Cooper-Clayton smoking cessation program.

Grant County's St. Elizabeth Medical Center will host the 13-week program from 6 to 7 p.m. on Mondays beginning April 6. St. Luke Hospital East in Fort Thomas will host the session 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Thursdays beginning April 9.

"Part of the reason it (Cooper-Clayton) has been successful for people to quit smoking is a combination of cessation methods - nicotine replacement therapy and a support group," said Emily Gresham Wherle, spokeswoman for the Northern Kentucky Independent District Health Department.

"The support group provides education, peers to talk to and information how to change to a non-smoking lifestyle."

Wherle said as much as 45 percent of heavy smokers who use the Cooper-Clayton method stop smoking.

The program was developed more than ago by two University of Kentucky faculty members - Thomas Cooper, a dentist and heavy smoker, and Richard Clayton, Ph.D, an expert on drug addiction.

It uses two principles to help people kick the habit. The first principal is "success is nothing more than a plan that is adhered to." The second is "a major problem can be solved when cut up into a series of smaller problems."

Wherle said the tax might be just the nudge people need to quit smoking.

"Statistically, every tax increase has brought smoking rates down," she said.

"A lot of people who smoke are looking for a reason to quit and this provides them that," she said.

The Cooper-Clayton program encourages participants to set aside money spent on cigarettes and use it to treat themselves when they quit.

The classes are sponsored by the Northern Kentucky Independent District Health Department, the Tobacco Prevention Coalition of Northern Kentucky, St. Elizabeth Medical Center, the St. Luke Hospitals, Northern Kentucky University, Grant County Schools and the Kentucky Cancer Program.

To register for the program or for more information on the Cooper-Clayton classes, visit [www.nkyhealth.org](http://www.nkyhealth.org) or call the Kentucky Cancer Program at 859-442-3525.

