Anesthesiologists Help Patients Extinguish Smoking Habits

In response to the continuing tobacco epidemic, the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) recently formed a Smoking Cessation Initiative Task Force in 2006.

Chicago (Vocus)May 15, 2008 -- In the United States, an estimated 25.9 million men (23.9 percent) and 20.7 million women (18.1 percent) are smokers.

In spite of decades of dire warnings about the dangers of tobacco use, people of all ages continue to use cigarettes and other tobacco products.

In response to the continuing tobacco epidemic, the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) recently formed a Smoking Cessation Initiative Task Force in 2006. ASA Member David O. Warner, M.D., an anesthesiologist at the Mayo Clinic, heads the nine–person smoking task force on behalf of ASA.

Dr. Warner explains how the ASA initiative differs from the numerous other “Stop Smoking” programs available today. “The focus of the ASA initiative is not only on the long-term benefits of not smoking, but also on the benefits of not smoking as long as possible before and after surgery. Smokers require special consideration when undergoing anesthesia for a surgical procedure, because smoking complicates anesthesia management and increases the risks of complications.”

As a component of the Smoking Cessation Initiative, ASA is advocating the Ask – Advise – Refer program. This offers physicians practical advice on how to engage their patients in a conversation about their smoking habits and refer them to helpful expert resources, like the national tobacco quit-line, 1-800-Quit-Now. These quit-lines provide free confidential telephone counseling services that are available to all Americans.

The ASA task force has developed a variety of resources to help both anesthesiologists and their patients, which can be found on the ASA Web site at: http://www.asahq.org/patientEducation/smoking_cessation.htm

Founded in 1905, the American Society of Anesthesiologists is an educational, research and scientific association with 43,000 members organized to raise and maintain the standards of the medical practice of anesthesiology and improve the care of the patient.

Visit the ASA Web site at www.asahq.org.

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