

CDC readies latest graphic anti-smoking ads

June 24 2014, by Steven Reinberg, Healthday Reporter

(HealthDay)—Amanda, a 30-year-old who smoked during her pregnancy, wants people to know how important it is to keep trying to quit the dangerous habit.

Her baby was born two months early, and spent weeks in an incubator.

"She wasn't born with the reflexes to talk or swallow, so she had to be tube-fed. She only weighed 3 pounds and she was in the [intensive care unit](#) for almost a month," Amanda said. "She suffers from asthma and allergies now."

"I want people to know that they can quit smoking," Amanda added. "Keep trying to quit and they will have a healthier life, and so will their children."

Amanda's compelling story is part of a new series of [ads](#) featuring former smokers whose lives have been harmed by [tobacco](#), U.S. health officials said Tuesday.

Since 2012, the campaign—Tips From Former Smokers—has been credited with helping hundreds of thousands of smokers quit, according to the campaign's creator, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The new series of ads are set to start July 7.

The ads also feature:

- Brett, 49, who lost most of his teeth to gum disease.

- Brian, 45, whose smoking and HIV led to clogged blood vessels and a stroke.
- Felicita, 54, who lost all of her teeth by age 50.
- Rose, 59, whose [lung cancer](#) resulted in surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.
- Shawn, 50, who breathes through an opening in his throat because of lung cancer.

Another ad in the new campaign features Terrie Hall, whose gripping first ad in 2012 was witnessed by more than 2.8 million viewers on YouTube. In that first ad, she was shown putting on a wig, inserting false teeth and using a scarf to cover a hole in her throat.

In the new ad, Hall begs smokers to quit: "Keep trying until you succeed—I don't want anybody to have to go through what I'm going through."

She died last September at the age of 53.

Vince Willmore, vice president for communications at the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, said in a statement, "These ads represent the kind of bold action needed to accelerate our nation's progress in reducing smoking and ultimately end the tobacco epidemic for good."

The ads are needed to counter the \$8.3 billion a year the tobacco industry spends to market "its deadly and addictive products," he added.

"In contrast to the industry's marketing that glamorizes smoking, the CDC's ads tell the harsh truth about how devastating and unglamorous cigarette smoking truly is and how smoking harms health at every stage of life," Willmore said.

When similar ads ran earlier this year they generated more than 100,000 additional calls to the CDC's quit line. On average, weekly calls were up 80 percent while the ads were running, compared with the week before they began. The CDC estimates that nearly 650,000 people visited the Tips website during the nine weeks of the campaign.

Along with the ads, the CDC is releasing a new report on smoking in the United States. The agency found that more than one in five U.S. adults uses some form of tobacco regularly. About 18 percent of Americans smoke cigarettes, but when cigars, little cigars, cigarillos, pipes and hookahs are added to the mix, the prevalence of tobacco use rises to 19.2 percent. When e-cigarettes and smokeless tobacco are included, this number jumps to 21.3 percent.

Factoring in adults who say they use tobacco occasionally, the prevalence rises to 25.2 percent overall, the agency reported.

Tobacco use, the CDC report said, is highest among men, the less educated and the poorest, and among lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender adults.

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States, killing about 480,000 people each year. For every person who dies from a smoking-related disease, about 30 more suffer serious illness caused by smoking. More than 16 million Americans are living with a smoking-related disease, according to the CDC.

The price of [smoking](#)-related illness costs more than \$289 billion a year—\$133 billion in direct medical care and more than \$156 billion in lost productivity, the agency said.

More information: To learn more, visit the CDC's [Tips From Former Smokers](#) campaign.

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