

Cinema Ad Campaign Against Smoking — National African American Organizations Launch Cinema Ad Campaign in Support of Effort to Assist Baltimore Smokers in Quitting. More than a million moviegoers will learn that if they smoke and wish to quit, help in doing so is just a telephone call away, thanks to a digital cinema ad campaign that will be run in eight Baltimore-area theaters for 12 weeks beginning in March, 2007.

The National Association of Neighborhoods (NAN), together with five other national African American organizations that form a coalition called African American Partners for a Tobacco-Free Society, are sponsoring a unique initiative in support of a new public health pilot program created by the American Legacy Foundation and called "eX".

National CineMedia, one of the nation's largest and most innovative in-theater advertising distributors and marketers, is handling placement of the coalition's digital program. Funding for the effort will come from grant monies provided by American Legacy.

"We strongly support programs and policies that will improve the health of citizens in our communities," said Ricardo C. Byrd, Executive Director of NAN, "especially those that are aimed at a lifestyle that claims the lives of more than 45,000 African Americans each year." Joining NAN in this coalition effort are the NAACP, the National Urban League, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, the National Newspaper Publishers Foundation and the National Conference of Black Mayors.

The "eX" program aims to change the way smokers feel about the difficult process of quitting smoking, and points them to valuable resources to guide their attempt to quit.

"eX", through use of broadcast media, will encourage smokers who wish to quit, but don't necessarily know how to do so, to access free resources and methods that are proven to increase their chances of quitting successfully.

The digital cinema ad campaign sponsored by African American Partners delivers the message of the "eX" program — using, in fact, a television spot prepared for the American Legacy campaign. The cinema ad campaign will appear on more than 100 screens and will include encouragement that smokers who want to quit should call the toll-free telephone number: 1-800-QUIT NOW. The telephone number is funded, supported and monitored by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and callers will be provided personalized coaching advice on quitting smoking. Also, the cinema ad will be played on lobby digital screens in certain theaters and in all, banners and posters specially designed for the "eX" program will be displayed.

In addition to the supportive efforts of the African American Partners, the American Legacy Foundation is collaborating with local Baltimore public health and community organizations to provide information and expert guidance to smokers who want to quit. Joining the Foundation in this significant effort are the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the City of Baltimore Health Department, the University of

Maryland Medical Center, the Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, the Maryland Academy of Family Physicians, the Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, Inc. and MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society.

Theaters showing the African American Partners cinema ad campaign are: East Point Movies 10; Bel Air Cinema 14; Hunt Valley Mall 12; Westminster Cranberry Mall 9; Movies @ Marley Station; Snowden Square; Owings Mills 17; and, Columbia Mall 14. For more information: becomeanex.org.