

monitor and evaluate states' efforts and ranked Maryland 15th among the 50 states and Washington, D.C. in its use of the settlement funds for tobacco prevention in December 2006.

Maryland spends approximately \$476 million in Medicaid costs directly associated with smoking each year and estimates that both direct and indirect costs attributable to tobacco use total nearly \$2 billion per year.

### You can quit

"I haven't seen a light from above or heard angels singing," says Alan Barnes, an analyst in the information services department.

But he has been tobacco-free for two months after smoking for 25 years. He says he feels fine but then he felt fine before he quit smoking. Like many smokers, he just wanted to quit.

The father of a four-year-old son says it was a personal goal to quit, but that the change in policy was a motivator to do it now. The reward is that he can spend time with his son and not feel that he should stand 40 feet away to protect his child from the effects of second-hand smoke.

He says that he did gain five pounds, initially, but he's been able to knock that off. And he recommends quitting cold turkey as the only way to go. Step down programs, which gradu-

ally reduce the amount of nicotine administered via a patch or gum, "just prolong the agony," he says.

In his case, the doctor prescribed a drug called Chantix, manufactured by Pfizer.

It works in two ways: (1) by shutting down the nicotine receptors in the brain and (2) by releasing a low level of dopamine, which is exactly what nicotine does for a smoker.

The recommended course of treatment is six months but the smoker will see results immediately. "It's not a panacea," Barnes says "it's still 75 percent smoker effort."

"The first three days were the worst," Barnes says. After that the Chantix stops the physical dependency; even the smell and taste of cigarettes becomes less appealing. "In fact," he says, "they begin to stink." But the smoker still has to deal with the psychological addiction, which experts say can be almost as strong.

Even if you are a long-time smoker, stopping can make a difference. Experts say that the body begins to rid itself of tobacco toxins as soon as you stop.

"There are ways to help people stop smoking. There are smoking cessation clinics. Chantix can be helpful but you have to want to quit. Even the manufacturer says It works best when used

in conjunction with smoking cessation programs"

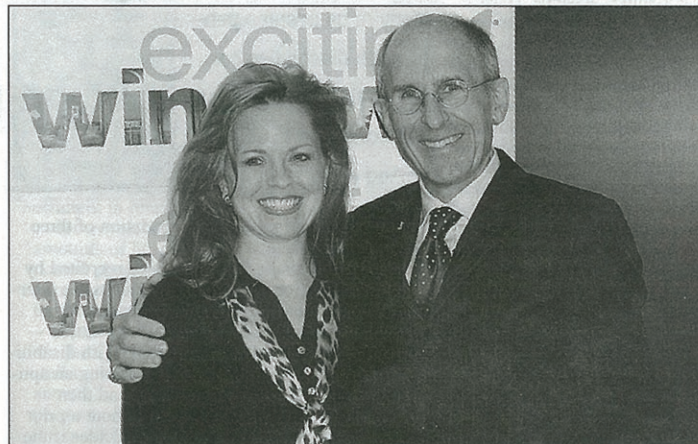
### Tips on quitting

- Don't try to go it alone. Tell your friends and ask for support.
- Destroy all your cigarettes.
- Substitute positive behaviors, such as nibbling on carrot or celery sticks or even chewing sugar-free gum when try-

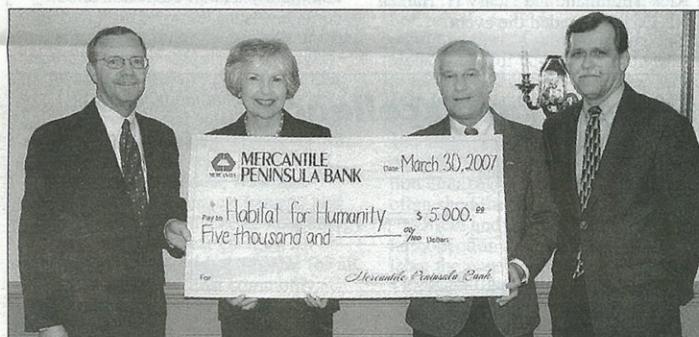
ing to quit smoking.

- Avoid coffee, sugar and alcohol as these stimulate the desire to smoke.
- Drink lots of water to flush the nicotine and other poisons out of your system.
- When the urge strikes, do deep-breathing exercises to reduce stress.

For more tips on quitting go to [www.tobaccofree.org/quitting.htm](http://www.tobaccofree.org/quitting.htm).



**LOCAL DECORATOR MEETS CELEBRITY** - Interior designer Michael Payne, host of HGTV's "Designing for the Sexes" greets Robin Lattinville, owner of Décor Elan, 119 West Main St., Salisbury, at the International Window Coverings Expo held recently in Washington, D.C. Lattinville is a certified window fashions specialist and member of Exciting Windows!, a national brand of custom shop-at-home service, an organization which has been endorsed by Payne. For more information about Décor Elan, visit [www.decorrelan.com](http://www.decorrelan.com) or call 410-749-6556.



**MERCANTILE PENINSULA BANK DONATES TO HABITAT** - Mercantile Peninsula Bank recently donated \$5,000 to Habitat for Humanity of Wicomico County for its "Banking on Our Community II" home. The project will result in the sixth Habitat home in the Church Street neighborhood. Mercantile Peninsula Bank's President and CEO, Jeffrey F. Turner (left), and Senior Vice President and Wicomico Regional Officer, Debbie Abbott presented the check to Barry King, executive director of Habitat for Humanity, and Gene Malone, administrative vice president of M&T, who is coordinating the project.

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