

WEDNESDAY

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The DAILY STATESMAN



SMOKING

Speaker to discuss the problems at conference

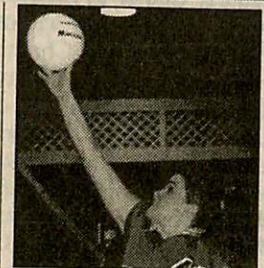
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Rebels beat volleyball

SPORTS

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HEALTHY CONFERENCE

Spitzer spreads message of hope for those who smoke and the health care providers

By Lorraine Heiser
Statesman Staff Writer



"Most healthcare providers already know people should not smoke, but don't have a clue on how to direct their patients to succeed in the venture," said Joel Spitzer, Friday's keynote speaker for the 2001 Healthy Lifestyles Conference. For over 25 years, Spitzer has been motivating both health care professionals and individuals to quit the habit he was among the first to recognize as an addiction. His insight allowed him to devise prevention and intervention strategies which were decades ahead of their time. His presentation, which will be given during the Healthy Lifestyles luncheon, beginning at 11:30 a.m., will address the subject of "The High Cost of Smoking."

According to Spitzer health care professionals are repeatedly frustrated by patients who do not heed warnings of existing problems or the long-term consequences of their actions.

"Some have even gone as far as to stop trying to educate their patients because they feel it is a futile effort," he said.

Spitzer disagrees. He believes professional intervention can positively influence a person's resolve to quit. His speech, geared toward health care workers, social workers, school officials and individuals, will provide information on the true costs of smoking.

"Many health care professionals are not properly informed or trained on successful intervention measures," Spitzer said. "Most are being told to endorse methods such as nicotine replacement products or other medications. But if you talk to persons who have successfully quit for long time periods, you will find these methods were seldom used by these individuals."

Spitzer said quitting smoking is not only important to everyone, but it is possible by everyone.

"No matter how much or how long a person has smoked, they need to understand that the possibility of quitting exists for them."

During his keynote address Friday, Spitzer proposes to focus on just one of the many reasons to quit smoking -- the high cost in real, emotional, medical and physiological terms -- as well as prevention and cessation, and the trends in teenage smoking and what can be done about it.

As a past member of the staff of both the American Cancer Association and the Good Health Program of the Rush Medical Center in Chicago, Spitzer has been involved in the development and implementation of health promotion programs for over 25 years. His primary area of expertise has been in smoking cessation programs.

Currently, he serves as a smoking prevention and cessation consultant to the Evanston (Ill.) Health Department. He also co-manages two Internet-based smoking cessation support groups with over 2,400 members. His educational materials are used nationwide.

Spitzer has conducted over 260 six-session clinics with over 4,500 participants. He has conducted clinics for major corporations, companies, universities, health departments and hospitals. According to Spitzer, the success rate of his clinics is double the national average.

Spitzer's training for his lifelong mission began with

bachelor of arts degree in Health Promotion from Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago and course work in alcohol counseling from another Chicago-based college.

"My training and experience were really developed all on the job while with the American Cancer Society and the Rush North Shore Medical Center," Spitzer stated. "Both jobs required a master's degree or equivalent in the original job descriptions. However, I got them both before I had my bachelor's degree."

"I was hired in both because I already had a strong following of companies and people behind me who knew of my success in the field," he added.

Spitzer's luncheon speech will be the highlight of a day-long conference offering insights from local experts on such varied topics as safety in the home; premenstrual dysphoric disorder; pro-active parenting; current trends in diet, exercise and preventive care; what can be done to protect families from the alarming rise in drug and alcohol abuse in the Bootheel; sexually abusive relationships; advice and help for family members dealing with a loved one's memory loss, aging and/or Alzheimer's; and understanding anger, especially in children.

Registration for "Raising Healthy and Safe Families in the 21st Century," the theme for this year's conference, will begin at 9:30 a.m. Friday, Sept. 7, at the Sacred Heart Catholic Hall, 102 E. Castor.

According to event chairpersons, Tracy Smith and Paula Kinchen, the \$15 registration fee will cover the lunch, which is being catered by Rebecca Sharp, the keynote speaker and the breakout sessions throughout the day.

Anyone still wishing to participate should contact Smith at 573-624-8773 or Kinchen at 573-624-8735.

Lorraine Heiser may be reached via e-mail at staff@dailystatesman.com.