

# Tri-County Memorial launches smoking cessation program

WHITEHALL, Wis. – Kevin Anderson started smoking at age 15. Thirty years later he finally quit, and is thrilled that he has.

“I think about all the troubles I had when I smoked,” Anderson, of Whitehall, said. “If I knew 10 years ago when I know today, I would have quit 10 years ago. Actually, I never would have started.”

Anderson had the unique focus and determination to quit cold turkey, but as a new ex-smoker he faces the same challenges all smokers face, says Jeanine Olson, Tri-

County Memorial cardiac rehabilitation nurse.

“Just one more cigarette. Just one. Just one to get through a stressful period. Or just one after supper,” Olson says. “Nicotine addiction is different for each person. But no matter who you are, it’s very difficult to stop and even more difficult to remain off cigarettes.”

That’s why Tri-County Memorial is launching “Starting to Stop,” a four-week smoking-cessation program, beginning Feb. 2 and running for four weeks.

Cost is \$45, including materials.

The short course “sets the stage for people to understand their addiction and quit permanently,” said Steve Ellison, Tri-County Memorial respiratory therapist.

Olson and Ellison will be holding four short “information and motivation” sessions Monday, Jan. 26, at the Alternative Ground, 36396 Main St., Whitehall

The sessions will be at 7 a.m.; noon; 3 p.m.; and 6:30 p.m.

Their goal is to explain the course, answer questions and get input on

how best to meet smokers’ needs.

They even are open to locating the February classes in a place and holding it at a time where they can reach the most smokers.

“We want the public to help us shape the direction of the course,” Ellison said. “Too many stop-smoking classes try to offer one answer for many smokers. It’s not that way, and we’re not going to be that way,” he said.

Interested people only have to attend one information session on Jan. 26, and will learn how the four-

week program can help smokers begin the process of quitting.

“In four weeks, there are several things we know Starting to Stop will do: It will explain about nicotine and cigarettes. We’ll discuss the many triggers and habits that keep smokers addicted. And we’ll offer strategies to quit and stay quit,” Olson said.

For more information, please call Olson or Ellison at Tri-County Memorial. You may email Olson at [jolson3@gundluth.org](mailto:jolson3@gundluth.org) or Ellison at [sellison@gundluth.org](mailto:sellison@gundluth.org).