



For: Immediate Release
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**JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute:
Warning Middle School Students About The Realities and Dangers of Smoking**

Edison, NJ—They're just preteens, still children and yet they are enticed by an activity that adults have come to see as the enemy. Smoking is addictive, unhealthy, harmful, and deadly, yet statistics show that children as young as sixth grade feel peer pressure to smoke.

The JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute (JRI) is making an effort to reach people before they start this deadly habit and become addicted. That means getting to them while they're young, before the peer pressure pushes them down a dangerous and unhealthy path.

"Statistics show that the younger you start smoking, the higher your risk of developing lung and laryngeal cancer," points out JRI Speech pathologist Kristie Soriano. "A 2002 National Youth tobacco survey completed by the Centers for Disease Control showed that 13% of middle schoolers used some form of tobacco. Our children are in danger and we must act fast and act now to get them away from that danger."

As a speech pathologist at the JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute, Soriano sees the devastating effects of tobacco use among laryngectomee patients. Even with state-of-the-art treatment techniques, resulting vocal quality is fair. Better to save the voice from the dangers of smoking, than have to repair damage done.

Says Soriano, "In the past two years, there has been an increase in referrals for oral cancer and swallowing problems related to lung cancer." The irony? Oral and laryngeal cancer can be nearly eliminated if smoking cigarettes is stopped.

To recognize the American Cancer Society's Great American Smoke Out on November 16, 2006 Kristie Soriano, Coordinator and Clinical Director of Speech, and Patti Shanes, Senior Speech Pathologist, both of JRI, and one of their outpatient laryngectomy patients met with sixth graders at the Woodrow Wilson Middle School in Edison to reinforce the message, "Don't Start!"

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Warning Middle School Students, add one

The JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute's Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology has been pleased to offer this program in the past with great success. Students have not only heard the message but have made the connection of what the effects of smoking mean to them. Here are a few testimonials from students who have participated in the *"Don't Start"* program:

"I will never smoke! I need to go home and talk to my parents about their smoking."

"I can't believe all the poisons that are in cigarettes. You'd be crazy to smoke."

"If someone approaches me with a cigarette I will say no."

Since 2001, JRI has partnered with various middle schools in Middlesex County to bring the message: "Don't Start."

For more information on program options or to schedule a workshop, call the JRI Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology at (732) 321-7063.

Founded in 1974, The JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute is a major component of Solaris Health System, one of New Jersey's most comprehensive healthcare networks. The JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute headquartered at the JFK Medical Center in Edison is a comprehensive rehabilitative service provider focused on restoring and returning disabled adults and children to optimal function and independence within the community. The Institute offers a complete array of inpatient and outpatient programs and services in rehabilitative health, including stroke, orthopedics, fitness, cardiac, women's health, pediatrics, and brain injury rehabilitation programs and services. JRI includes a 94-bed inpatient center in Edison. Outpatient centers are located in Edison, Metuchen, Monroe, and Plainfield. Affiliated with the JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute is the Shore Rehabilitation Institute, a 40-bed inpatient and outpatient comprehensive rehabilitation hospital located in Brick, NJ. The JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) for its Comprehensive Inpatient Rehabilitation, Brain Injury, and Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation programs. For more information on The JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute, call (732) 321-7790 or visit the organization online at <http://www.njrehab.org>.

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