
Quitting time

By DANA SANCHEZ

Assistant Englewood Editor

ENGLEWOOD — Hypnotist Amy Hibberd has been swamped with requests for help to quit smoking since a \$1-per-pack cigarette tax increase went into effect Wednesday.

Although she springs from what she calls "the drug generation," the Manhattan transplant says she never smoked, drank alcohol or used drugs, which makes her, among her peers, a "clear."

That means her body is unadulterated by the toxins that plague her clients, better enabling her to help them using hypnosis, she says.

Although some of Hibberd's clients live out of state and out of the country, local calls have flooded in recently from people trying to quit smoking.

Money is a powerful motivator, she says.

"Like anything else, there's a line people aren't willing to cross," she said. And with the \$1 tax increase, she's finding many aren't willing to go there.

Increased taxes are a good predictor of behavioral changes in smokers, according to Scot Hoverman, tobacco policy coordinator for the Charlotte County Health Department.

With the latest tax increase, he said he expects 7 percent to 10 percent of current smokers to quit, based on previous tax increases and what he's seen in other states.

"It sounds high, but that means 93 percent don't quit," he said.