



## St. Mary's offers Freedom from Smoking course starting in January

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Athens, Ga.** – St. Mary's Respiratory Services will offer the American Lung Association's Freedom from Smoking program starting Jan. 7 for any adult who wishes to quit smoking. The program will be facilitated by registered respiratory therapist and certified instructor Todd Drake, an ex-smoker. Enrollment is now open.



The class will meet at St. Mary's Outpatient Diagnostic, Rehab and Wellness Center, located at 2470 Daniells Bridge Road, Building 300, Athens, on Tuesdays, Jan. 7 through Feb. 25 at 6 p.m. The center is located just off the Oconee Connector near Loop 10 and Epps Bridge Crossing. Enrollment costs \$60 per person.

The American Lung Association is the oldest voluntary health organization in the United States. The Freedom from Smoking class includes eight sessions and features a step-by-step plan for quitting smoking. It was first introduced more than 30 years ago and has helped over 1 million Americans end their addiction to tobacco. In a study conducted by Fordham University Graduate School of Business, Freedom from Smoking was ranked the most effective smoking cessation program.

"Quitting is a process, and Freedom from Smoking is individualized for each participant," Drake said. "Because no single approach is effective for all smokers, the class includes a variety of evidence-based cessation techniques. We facilitate the sessions in a small-group setting, so participants get personalized attention as well as support from their peers."

According to evaluation studies conducted by the American Lung Association, participants experience immediate health benefits and are six times more likely to be smoke-free one year later than those who quit on their own.

"The best benefit of quitting smoking is that it gives you the chance to live a long, healthy, happy life," said Drake. "This class can be a real benefit to people all across the communities we serve."

For more information or to apply for the program, call Drake at 706.389.2915 or visit <http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/how-to-quit/getting-help/>.



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