**Dr. Betty’s Smoke-Out Challenge** part of the Institute of Education for the Care of Chronic Diseases (IECCD) Children’s Education Health Series, provides low literacy, relatable characters:

- To encourage active participation in their own health and wellness.
- To encourage increased communication with patients and their caregivers.
- To improve self-efficacy for improved health literacy and to build capacity.

**Problem**

Chronic Diseases impact everyone regardless of their age, gender, socioeconomic status or ethnicity. Disadvantaged populations, however, are disproportionately affected. Chronic Diseases account for a large percentage of the premature and preventable deaths reported throughout the entire world. The SDR (2012) estimates that more than 75 million people worldwide die each year from chronic noncommunicable diseases such as heart disease and stroke, diabetes, lung diseases such as asthma, and cancer – twice the number of deaths from infectious diseases, maternal and perinatal conditions, and nutritional deficiencies combined. “It is estimated that in the United States, approximately 49% of Americans have one or more chronic disease” (For a Healthy America, 2012). The United States was once again found to have the highest rates of obesity, asthma, and lipid disorders, a position that has been held for decades. In addition to the mortality rates due to chronic disease, the CDC reports high levels of disability and severely diminished quality of life for Americans as they age (CDC, 2007). Approximately 6 million New Yorkers are adversely affected (NYS DOH, 2012).

According to the CDC (2007), in the United States each year “an estimated 443,000 deaths” and other negative health effects can be attributed to tobacco use. The number of smokers in New York City is once again on the rise from previous years, changing from 14.6% in 2012 to 16.1% in 2014 (NYC DOHMH, 2014). This accounts for approximately 602,000 people, 177,000 of which are New York City public school children.

**Methods**

Student workshops to teach them:

- Health information about tobacco and chronic diseases such as asthma.
- Health strategies to assist them in developing and maintaining healthy lifestyles.
- Teacher workshops to teach them how to incorporate health topics into every subject through examples, writing assignments, and special projects.

**Goals**

- Increased knowledge.
- Increased skills.

**Results**

The Institute of Education for the Care of Chronic Diseases (IECCD) encourages multi-disciplinary approaches to care.

IECCD created “Dr. Betty’s Smoke-Out Challenge” Book Series to provide comprehensive, low literacy chronic disease information and encourage advocacy/ informed decision-making in children/adolescents for better health outcomes. Relatable characters are brought to life in each story. Dr. Betty’s Smoke-Out Challenge addresses the negative impact of tobacco and serves as a Call-to-Action towards policy change.

A Parent Guide and a Teacher’s Guide is now available to help increase health literacy and self-efficacy, giving them tools to cultivate coping mechanisms. Theoretical constructs include the Health Belief Model, the Stages of Change Model and the Social Learning Theory. The books address decision making and cognitive dissonance.

**Implications**

Reduced rates of chronic diseases with increased health literacy.

**Recommendation**

Increase use of relatable short stories to address health issues and encourage participation among youth. "Dr. Betty’s Smoke-Out Challenge” books help share resources with parents, providers, educators, and policy makers.