



## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

### **MEDICATION SAFETY INFORMATION:** **VARENICLINE (CHANTIX™)**

May 30, 2008

Dear Veteran,

The Department of Veterans Affairs would like to inform you of safety concerns with your medication called varenicline, also known as Chantix™, which you may be taking to help you stop smoking.

Earlier this year, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a Public Health Advisory after receiving reports of changes in behavior, agitation, depressed mood, and thoughts of suicide in patients taking varenicline (Chantix™).

On May 22, 2008, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) banned the use of varenicline (Chantix™) in airline pilots and air traffic controllers due to reports to the FDA of patients experiencing the following symptoms while taking varenicline (Chantix™):

- loss of consciousness,
- seizures,
- uncontrolled muscle movements,
- vision disturbances,
- hearing or seeing imaginary things,
- feelings of fear, mistrust, or suspicion, and
- other severe disruptions in thought and behavior.

Use of varenicline (Chantix™) in persons operating motor vehicles or heavy machinery can lead to serious injury. We recommend that you use caution when driving or operating vehicles and/or machinery until you know how varenicline (Chantix™) affects you. We also recommend that you contact your health care provider as soon as possible if you notice any changes in mood or behavior while you are taking varenicline (Chantix™).

Thank you.

Sincerely,