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Oregon Tobacco Quit Line offers more online coaching; more tobacco users click to quit

Smokers who use Quit Line report better chances of breaking the habit

Almost 70 percent of Oregon tobacco users want to quit, and those who use the free Oregon Tobacco Quit Line have a better chance of breaking their addiction for good. New online coaching services, in addition to phone coaching, make the Quit Line more convenient and accessible than ever.

“We know that getting help really works when people are trying to quit tobacco,” said Katrina Hedberg, M.D., M.P.H., state epidemiologist, Oregon Health Authority’s Oregon Public Health. “The Oregon Tobacco Quit Line has helped people quit over the phone for years. The greatly enhanced online services provide personal support and are a convenient option for people who need easy, anytime access or who may not want to talk on the phone.”

Online, people trying to quit can receive live coaching from trained experts with a track record of helping people quit; ask questions or share advice in user forums; and set a goal and track progress on a personal quit plan. Services are free and available 24 hours a day, and there is no limit on use. Online users, as well as phone participants, may be eligible for free nicotine gum or patches that can be sent directly to their homes.

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Online counseling can be accessed in two ways:

- People can sign up for online counseling by going to www.quitnow.net/Oregon and registering for the online program.
- People can also sign up by calling 1.800.QUIT.NOW and selecting the “chat online with a counselor” option.

Online counseling services are currently available in English only. Online counseling in Spanish will be available next year. Phone services are available in Spanish at 1-877-2NOFUME.

More online counseling is in response to what Oregonians’ have been telling the program. Local tobacco users who were thinking about quitting said having the option of either phone or online counseling would make it more convenient to access information, counseling and medications.

Smokers also emphasized that they liked knowing that whether by phone or Web they were getting help from real people who were caring and friendly.

For the past 10 years, the Oregon Tobacco Quit Line has been an important and effective resource for anyone wanting to break addiction to tobacco or help someone who is ready to quit. The Quit Line is paid for from taxes collected on tobacco products to promote education and prevention of tobacco use and to promote tobacco cessation programs.

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While the percentage of adults who smoke has decreased by 26 percent since the Oregon Tobacco Prevention and Education Program began – from 23.7 percent in 1996 to 17.5 percent in 2009 – tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death. Reducing tobacco use in Oregon can help decrease the number of cancer cases, heart disease, and other health problems, which can in turn save lives and reduce health care costs.

“The best thing a tobacco user can do for his or her health is quit,” Hedberg said. “People quit in very different, personal ways, and they can use the Quit Line however they need – for coaching, or just for information and a quit plan.”

To access the Oregon Tobacco Quit Line visit www.quitnow.net/Oregon or call 1.800.QUIT.NOW (1-800-784-8669) or 1-877-2NO-FUME (1-877-266-3863).

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