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OKLAHOMA TOBACCO HELPLINE PUTS MUSCLE BEHIND NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS TO QUIT SMOKING

Free Coaching by Phone and Free Patches or Gum Help Oklahomans Quit for Good

OKLAHOMA CITY (December 28, 2009) – The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) is putting some muscle behind Oklahomans who have resolved to quit tobacco for the New Year by providing callers with a free 2-week supply of patches or gum along with free quit coaching.

“New Year’s resolutions are most effective when you are committed to make a change, have a plan and have people around you that support your decision,” said Tracey Strader, TSET executive director. “The Helpline is free and callers work with a Quit Coach[®] to create a quit plan that includes setting a quit date, getting support from friends and family and identifying strategies to cope with cravings.”

Among those who have used the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline to quit for good are Drew and Jenny, a young couple from Oklahoma City. When asked about their experience, they stressed how easy it was to connect with their Quit Coach.

“I was skeptical about calling because I just couldn’t believe there wasn’t a catch,” said Jenny. “But, they know exactly what you are going through, they genuinely want to help you, no lecture, no pressure, they just want to talk you down off the ledge. Best of all, it’s a totally free service.”

The Helpline is funded by the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET), the Oklahoma State Department of Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Last year, the Helpline served more than 37,000 Oklahomans and is expecting to serve more than 40,000 this year.

The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline operates seven days a week. Services are available to Oklahomans who smoke as well as those who use other tobacco products. Services are also available in Spanish by calling

1-800-793-1552 and for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing through Video Phone at 1-206-494-9650. For more information about the Helpline, go to: www.ok.gov/tset/Programs/Helpline.html. For more information about quitting tobacco use go to: www.smokefree.gov.

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The Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust was established through a constitutional amendment approved by Oklahoma voters in 2000. While most state governments have failed to keep their promise to use tobacco settlement funds for tobacco prevention and other programs to improve health, Oklahomans have created an endowment to assure that funds will be available for these purposes for generations to come. To learn more go to: www.tset.ok.gov.

Photo Cutline (L-R): Drew and Jenny of Oklahoma City used the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline (1-800-QUIT-NOW) to successfully quit smoking. More than 40,000 Oklahomans are expected to call the Helpline for free quit coaching and free patches or gum this year.

Editor – Potential Sidebar Information:

Make a Plan to Quit Your Nicotine Addiction – for FREE

Call the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW to work with a Quit Coach on the best quit plan for you. The call is free, the coaching is free and right now registered callers can receive a free 2-week Starter Kit of nicotine patches or gum.

Five Day Countdown

Start by making your home and vehicle a tobacco free zone.

5 Days Before Your Quit Date

Think about your reasons for quitting. Write them down.

Tell your friends and family you are planning to quit.

Stop buying cigarettes

4 Days Before Your Quit Date

Pay attention to when and why you smoke.

Think of other things to hold in your hand instead of a cigarette

Think of habits or routines to change.

3 Days Before Your Quit Date

What will you do with the extra money when you stop buying cigarettes? Make a list.

Think about who you can contact when you need help.

2 Days Before Your Quit Date

Buy the nicotine patch or nicotine gum

Or visit your doctor to get the nicotine inhaler, nasal spray, or the non-nicotine pill

(Continued)

1 Day Before Your Quit Date

- Put away lighters and ashtrays.
- Destroy all cigarettes and matches.
- Clean your clothes to get rid of the smell of cigarette smoke

Quit Day

- Think of yourself as a non-smoker
- Remind family and friends that this is your quit day.
- Stay away from alcohol.
- Do something special for yourself

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Save Money

The average price for a pack of cigarettes in Oklahoma is approximately \$4.80
At a pack a day, that adds up to about \$1752 a year. Over ten years, that's \$17,520.

Save Time

On average it takes 7 minutes to smoke a cigarette. At a pack a day, that's just over 2 hours and 20 minutes. Over ten years, that's 354 days, or almost one entire year spent smoking.

Feel Better *(Source: American Lung Association)*

Within 20 minutes of quitting:

Blood pressure decreases and pulse rate drops

Within 8 hours of quitting:

Oxygen level in blood returns to normal

Within 24 hours of quitting:

Chance of a heart attack decreases

Within 48 hours of quitting:

Ability to smell and taste is enhanced

Within 3 months of quitting:

Circulation and lung function improve

Within 9 months of quitting:

Coughing, sinus congestion, wheezing, fatigue and shortness of breathe decrease

Within 1 year of quitting:

Risk of coronary heart disease is lowered to half of that of a smoker