



STATE OF OKLAHOMA

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State Tobacco Helpline Number Switches to 1-800-QUIT-NOW *Service Unchanged, New Number Allows State to Benefit from National Advertising*

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahomans may now reach the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW. Citing the opportunity for Oklahoma to benefit from national advertising campaigns to promote the use of quitlines across the country, the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust announced today that the toll-free number for the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline has changed to 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). The change is effective immediately.

“By changing the number to 1-800-QUIT-NOW, Oklahoma will be joining other states in a national network of quitlines that will allow us to take full advantage of national advertising campaigns,” said Tracey Strader, executive director of the Endowment.

Only the new easy-to-remember number has changed. “All Helpline services will remain the same,” said Strader. “The old Helpline number, 1-866-PITCH-EM, will remain active for at least a year so that anyone who calls it will be automatically transferred to the new number.”

The Helpline provides free professional cessation assistance through a series of telephone coaching or counseling sessions with a Helpline Specialist. Callers work with the same Specialist throughout their quitting process to develop and work through a personalized quit plan based on their individual needs.

The Helpline also offers nicotine patches or nicotine gum on a limited basis and free of charge to those who are totally uninsured or those who are on Medicare when they participate in the Helpline’s counseling program. Other callers are assisted by Specialists to identify and access benefits that may be available to them through their employer, Medicaid, or other insurance to cover the cost of nicotine replacement products and other cessation medications. The Helpline Specialists may also be able to help callers locate local resources such as community-based cessation classes.

The toll-free Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline was launched in September 2003 and is supported primarily with earnings from the Endowment. The state health department has recently provided supplemental funding to the Helpline to assist in covering costs for the high number of calls caused by the increase in the state tobacco tax. Over 10,000 tobacco users have received free assistance through the Helpline since Oklahoma voters approved an increase to the state tobacco tax in November 2004.

The Helpline’s hours of operation are 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week, and staff will return any messages left after hours. For more information, please see: www.tset.ok.gov/programs/helpline.html .

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