



Alliance Offers Hotline To Help Stop Smoking

To help smokers and other tobacco users in Pottawatomie County quit tobacco, the Pottawatomie Alliance Toward Community Health Coalition is promoting free cessation assistance through the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

The increase in federal taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco products took effect March 31 and applies to both tribal and non-tribal sales. Cigarette taxes will increase by 62 cents per pack.

“Statewide surveys show that most smokers in Oklahoma want to completely quit smoking,” said Holly Gordon of the American Red Cross and coalition chairman. “With the price of tobacco going up and free help available, there’s never been a better time to quit for good.”

By calling the Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), Oklahomans receive free telephone-based coaching sessions with a professional quit coach. Coaching focuses on developing a quit plan tailored to the caller’s personal needs and offer critical support in sticking with the plan. Most Oklahomans who call the Helpline for coaching also receive free nicotine patches or gum mailed directly to their homes.

Independent evaluation results show that combining Helpline coaching with the use of cessation medications increases a person’s chances of quitting eight times over cold turkey alone. The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline is available seven days a week, both day and night. Services are also available in Spanish by calling 1-800-793-1552, and for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing through Video Relay at 1-866-748-2436. For more information, please visit: <http://www.ok.gov/tset/Programs/Helpline.html>.

Serving more than 22,000 Oklahomans in fiscal year 2008, the Helpline is supported primarily by the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) with assistance from the Oklahoma State Department of Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Pottawatomie Alliance Toward Community Health coalition received a Communities of Excellence grant from TSET in 2004 to develop and implement a comprehensive program to reduce tobacco use in Pottawatomie County. Tobacco use is Oklahoma’s number one cause of preventable death.