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Tobacco helpline helps callers quit

The Muskogee Turning Point Coalition is encouraging smokers and other tobacco users in Muskogee County to call the free Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline at (800) 784-8669 now to prepare for New Year's resolutions.

In its first three years of operation, the Helpline has already served many local residents.

Megan Shea, cessation systems coordinator for the Communities of Excellence Tobacco Program, says 846 tobacco users in Muskogee County received services from the Helpline between August 2003 and June 2006.

An evaluation by the University of Oklahoma College of Public Health found that even a full year after calling the Helpline, participants are six times more likely to have quit tobacco than those who just go "cold turkey."

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.ok.gov/tset/Programs/Tobacco_Use_Prevention_and_Cessation.