



# News Release

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Feb. 28, 2008

Contact: Chris Hollenback, (608) 262-3902  
[Ch3@ctri.medicine.wisc.edu](mailto:Ch3@ctri.medicine.wisc.edu)  
Moira Harrington, (608) 481-1505 cell

## **Calls to Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line Break All Records**

As February winds down, the Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line today announced that in the first two months of 2008 it has fielded a record-breaking 20,000 calls from Wisconsinites looking for help to quit. To put this in context, during a typical *year*, the quit line provides services to about 9,000 state residents.

“This unprecedented success in assisting Wisconsin smokers through 1-800-QUIT-NOW breaks all previous state records,” said Dr. Michael Fiore, director of the University of Wisconsin Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention, which manages the quit line. “National peers who provide quit services in other states report they have never before seen such a successful state effort to help smokers quit.”

Three factors led to this increase in quit attempts by Wisconsin smokers:

- A \$1 increase in the state’s tobacco excise tax
- New Year’s resolutions
- Free coaching and medication provided through the Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line

Here is a breakdown on who called the quit line and what kind of services they received:

- 90 percent were tobacco users. The remaining 10 percent were health-care providers, and friends and family members who wanted to help those considering quit attempts.
- 96 percent requested further assistance from the quit line, including science-based coaching to help them quit.
- Among those who requested a two-week starter kit of nicotine medicines, 65 percent chose to receive stop-smoking patches. The remaining 35 percent chose either nicotine gum or lozenges.
- 35 percent identified themselves as Medicaid enrollees or as uninsured.

As a result of these quit attempts, health-care costs associated with smoking will diminish, pumping much-needed revenue into other sectors of Wisconsin’s economy. Annual state smoking-related costs are \$2.2 billion, with \$480 million borne by Wisconsin Medicaid alone.

(more)

A lower smoking rate also reduces the suffering of families affected by smoking-related disease and death. Currently, 8,000 families suffer a smoking-related death each year in Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line was established in 2001 and has served more than 80,000 Wisconsinites with free, nonjudgmental and confidential help. Quit coaches help create individualized quit plans. The plans include tips on how to live smoke free as well as provide contact information for local quit-tobacco programs throughout the state. Anyone can access this same list of local programs -- sorted by county -- by visiting [WiQuitLine.org](http://WiQuitLine.org).

All Quit Line users receive free information in the mail after contacting the quit line either through the Web or by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW. At the caller's request, quit coaches will call back up to four times to offer more free assistance.

Beginning on Jan. 1, the quit line started providing a two-week starter kit of FDA-approved nicotine medication (patch, gum or lozenges) for callers who agree to receive the science-based quit line coaching.

The quit line is available from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week. At other times, callers can leave a message for a return call. Coaches fluent in many languages are available to callers.

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services contracts with the University of Wisconsin Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention to provide services through the quit line.

###