



***NOTE TO MEDIA:** Additional "Success Stories" and corresponding photos for different regions of New York State are available to read or download at the New York State Smokers' Quitline's Online News Room: <https://nysmokefree.com/newsroom>. Please reach out to us any time for interviews to enhance your coverage of New Year's resolutions and wellness stories. Tobacco cessation experts are available locally and via Zoom; clients may be available upon request.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EIGHT YEARS OF BEING TOBACCO-FREE, JIM O. IS LIVING HIS BEST LIFE AT 73

With assistance from the New York State Smokers' Quitline, Central New York man is living proof 'it's never too late' to stop smoking



NEW HAVEN, N.Y. – December 30, 2021 – The beginning of a new year is a popular time to make resolutions for improved wellness. For those who use tobacco products, the New Year provides an opportunity to seek assistance to become tobacco-free. The **New York State Smokers' Quitline** (Quitline) understands the challenges involved to stop smoking for good, and reminds all New York State residents free resources are available seven days a week at 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) and nysmokefree.com.

Jim O. of New Haven, N.Y. (*pictured with grandchildren Triona and Teagan*), approximately 40 miles north of Syracuse in Central New York, began using cigarettes at age 15 and tried countless times during the next 50 years to become tobacco-free. Finally, upon seeking assistance from the Quitline just after the New Year in 2014, Jim made his resolution stick.

“Receiving free nicotine patches from the Quitline did the trick for me,” Jim said. “Once I used these, I learned how to quit without suffering the effects of nicotine withdrawal. It was much easier to quit this way rather than ‘cold turkey.’”

Finding initial success was just the start of a tobacco-free journey for Jim. He needed to ensure he wouldn’t relapse. Jim found inspiration through his grandchildren.

“A few months in, I told my grandchildren I had become tobacco-free,” he said. “My granddaughter Triona, who was a young child at the time, threw her arms around me and shouted, ‘I am so proud of you!’ She sealed the deal for me. At that moment, I knew I’d never pick up a cigarette again.”

Jim is 73 years old and feels healthier than ever. Food tastes better and his mental outlook on life is more positive than he can ever recall. He also is thankful he stopped smoking “just in time,” as his improved health and breathing improved the outcome of a hospital stay in 2016.

“I slipped on ice, fell, broke eight ribs and then contracted pneumonia while I was in the hospital,” Jim said. “I ended up staying in there for 26 days, but thank God I had quit smoking. Pneumonia and broken ribs were more than enough for me to handle.”

For all those seeking to become tobacco-free in 2022, Jim offers two pieces of advice: call the Quitline and stay focused even when times get tough. “It’s tough to do it alone,” he said. “There are so many free resources available through the Quitline. Even just talking to someone is a step in the right direction.”

The Quitline’s Quit Coaches help tobacco users develop a personalized approach for success by listing triggers and setting a quit-date. Most people also are eligible to receive a free starter supply of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) via mail, typically in the form of nicotine patches and often with supplemental nicotine gum or nicotine lozenges. When used as instructed and in combination, NRT products can double or triple the odds of becoming and staying tobacco-free.

The Quitline also recommends all tobacco users – whether they are practicing their first or tenth quit-attempt – to visit the CDC’s “Benefits of Quitting” website at https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/how_to_quit/benefits/index.htm. This resource

offers a thorough compilation of health benefits at any age, regardless of how long or how much one smoked.

The Quitline wishes all New York State residents a happy, healthy and tobacco-free 2022.

About the New York State Smokers' Quitline

The New York State Smokers' Quitline is a service of the New York State Department of Health and based at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, N.Y. It is one of the first and busiest state quitlines in the nation and has responded to nearly 3 million calls since it began operating in 2000. The Quitline encourages nicotine users to talk with their healthcare professionals and access available Medicaid or health insurance benefits for stop-smoking medications. All New York State residents can call **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) for coaching and resources, free of charge, seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. Visit www.nysmokefree.com for more information.

About Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center is a community united by the drive to eliminate cancer's grip on humanity by unlocking its secrets through personalized approaches and unleashing the healing power of hope. Founded by Dr. Roswell Park in 1898, it is the only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center in Upstate New York. Learn more at www.roswellpark.org, or contact us at 1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355) or ASKRoswell@roswellpark.org.

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