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CELEBRATE MENTAL HEALTH MONTH IN MAY BY BECOMING TOBACCO-FREE

*Cigarette smoking worsens chronic mental health conditions;
the New York State Smokers' Quitline offers free resources to quit*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Apr. 26, 2019 – May is Mental Health Month, which promotes healthy lifestyle choices and raises awareness about conditions such as depression, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. Smoking exacerbates treatment for these conditions and affects people with poor mental health disproportionately. The New York State Smokers' Quitline (Quitline) encourages all residents of New York State, especially those suffering from chronic mental health conditions, to call **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) for free resources to become tobacco-free.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), while approximately one in four adults in the U.S. report having mental health or substance abuse disorder, they consume nearly 40 percent of cigarettes smoked. The CDC also [reports](#):

- Nicotine has mood-altering effects that can temporarily mask the negative symptoms of mental illness, putting people with mental illness at higher risk for cigarette use and nicotine addiction.
- Tobacco smoke can interact with and inhibit the effectiveness of certain medications taken by mental health and substance abuse patients.
- The most common causes of death among people with mental illness are heart disease, cancer and lung disease, which can all be caused by smoking.

Becoming tobacco-free improves anxiety, mood, stress and even [treatment outcomes](#) for mental health conditions. In addition to support from a doctor and/or mental health specialist, Quit Coaches at the Quitline can assist tobacco-users to develop a quit-plan through personalized coaching support, to overcome cravings and to properly use nicotine replacement therapy such as patches, gum and lozenges.

The Quitline encourages all smokers to support Mental Health Month by taking steps to become tobacco-free and understands the linkage between smoking and poor mental health. In 2018, [39 percent of New York State callers](#) to the Quitline reported having a mental health condition.

Besides calling **1-866-NY-QUITS** any day of the week beginning at 9 a.m., smokers and their loved ones can access Quitline resources anytime online at www.nysmokefree.com for additional smoking cessation tools and tips.

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. It is one of the first and busiest state quitlines in the nation, and has responded to more than 2.5 million calls since its inception in 1999. The Quitline encourages tobacco users to talk with their healthcare providers 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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NOTE TO MEDIA: Please visit and bookmark the Quitline's Online News Room website at <http://www.nysmokefree.com/NewsRoom> for the latest smoking cessation updates and experts for stories.