



***NOTE TO MEDIA:** Nearly a dozen "Success Stories" and downloadable photos for different regions of New York State are available at the Quitline's Online News Room: <https://nysmokefree.com/newsroom>. Inspirational New Yorkers became nicotine-free in 2020 for a variety of reasons: COVID-19 concerns, the birth of a child, improved health, battling cancer and much more. Please reach out to the Quitline any time, any day, for supplemental interviews to enhance your coverage of New Year's resolutions and stories of hope heading into 2021.*

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

##### Media Contact

Tony Astran, MPA, APR, TTS  
New York State Smokers' Quitline  
716-982-2088 (cell)  
[anthony.astran@roswellpark.org](mailto:anthony.astran@roswellpark.org)

## **BUFFALO-AREA MAN PROVIDES INSPIRATION TO BECOME TOBACCO-FREE IN 2021**

*Despite the challenges of 2020, Michael F. overcame a 50-year addiction to smoking with support from the New York State Smokers' Quitline*

**BUFFALO, N.Y. – Dec. 31, 2020** – Michael F. is a shining example for all tobacco users to keep trying to quit, no matter how many attempts or how long the process takes. The Buffalo, N.Y. resident was one of the earliest clients of the New York State Smokers' Quitline's (Quitline) 20-year history and frequently utilized its free services. After multiple



quit-attempts and only being able to remain tobacco-free from anywhere between one to six months at a stretch, Michael finally said goodbye for good to tobacco products in November 2019.

Michael (*pictured at left*), 67, first began smoking pipes nearly 50 years ago and later switched to hand-rolled cigarettes. He always had a desire to become tobacco-free and sought assistance from the Quitline starting in the early 2000s. After countless attempts, the efforts finally "clicked" for 61 weeks and counting.

“The Quitline has always been enormously helpful, and I continue to call back to thank the Quit Coaches and let them know how many weeks I’ve been tobacco-free,” Michael said. “This time around, setting a quit-date and really sticking to it is what worked. It took a long time, but I’m done for good and couldn’t be happier.”

Michael said most people around him didn’t realize he was such a heavy smoker for so long, especially because he maintains an active lifestyle through regular walking and bicycling. He felt ashamed and often tried to hide his cigarette breaks and the lingering smell on his hands and clothes.

As Michael made more and more quit-attempts over the years, he continued to learn what techniques worked and which ones led to pitfalls. He credits the Quitline’s positive approach as a factor in continuing to try again and again.

“Having support during the quit-process makes all the difference,” Michael said. “As a restaurant cook, I’ve had co-workers over the years who smoked, and they wouldn’t care if I quit or not. Likewise, some friends who never smoked could not understand why I couldn’t just stop. That’s why the Quit Coaches are so great. I can bounce thoughts off them, and it feels like they can really understand and relate to me.”

Today, Michael feels a profound sense of freedom through tobacco-free living. He finds he has much more free time to enjoy life as well as more money in his pocket. For all those who have tried to become tobacco-free in the past and have so far been unsuccessful, Michael hopes his story will inspire them to keep trying.

“Don’t give up and don’t take it personally if you’re unsuccessful, because smoking is such a strong addiction,” he said. “Start small and take it one step at a time. Soon, you’ll look better, feel better and smell cleaner. I also would recommend to Quitline to anyone. Give it a shot – it’s worth it.”

The Quitline encourages all tobacco and vape-product users to make 2021 their best year ever by becoming tobacco-free, especially in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. According to the CDC, those who smoke [suffer more severe effects](#) if infected with the coronavirus.

The Quitline recommends tobacco and vape-product users consult a healthcare professional as part of a tobacco-free journey. Healthcare professionals can provide referrals to the

Quitline for free quit-coaching and free NRT such as nicotine patches and nicotine gum or lozenges – and nearly all participants are eligible. The Quitline’s Quit Coaches are available seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. by calling 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) beginning at 9 a.m. or by visiting [www.nysmokefree.com](http://www.nysmokefree.com) and requesting a call.

### **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](http://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](http://www.roswellpark.org), or contact us at 1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355) or [ASKRoswell@roswellpark.org](mailto:ASKRoswell@roswellpark.org).

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