



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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- *Nurses serve a frontline role for treating tobacco dependence*
- *The NYS Smokers' Quitline (Quitline) celebrates National Nurses Week via an online chat with a panel of statewide nurses on Friday, May 7 at noon*
- *Nurses can help patients become tobacco-free by prescribing FDA-approved stop-smoking medication and referring patients to the Quitline*

## NURSES PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE TO HELP TOBACCO USERS IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH

*The New York State Smokers' Quitline encourages nurses to refer patients; online chat with nurses slated May 7 to discuss tobacco dependence treatment*

**BUFFALO, N.Y. – May 5, 2021** – In today's world of healthcare, a nurse is often the first professional patients see during routine care visits. For tobacco users needing treatment to overcome nicotine addiction, nurses play a vital role in facilitating successful outcomes. During this year's **National Nurses Week**, the New York State Smokers' Quitline (Quitline) encourages all nurses to refer their tobacco-using patients for additional support and will pay tribute to nurses everywhere through an online roundtable discussion on Friday, May 7.

The Quitline supports the position statement and practice recommendations set forth by the Board of Directors for the [American Nurses Association](#) (ANA). "One statement that particularly resonates with us is the ANA's position that **nurses can assume leadership roles within systems of care to improve access to quality care**," said Patricia Bax, the Quitline's marketing and outreach coordinator. Bax herself is a registered nurse and works daily with statewide healthcare professionals to connect them with the Quitline's [Patient Referral Program](#).

“Nurses are the ultimate caregivers, and they’re often asked to do so much in such a short period of time,” Bax added. “We want to remind nurses the Quitline is here to support them. The Quitline provides free services and evidence-based practices to collaborate with healthcare professionals for successful patient outcomes. We cannot stress enough: quitting smoking is the single most important thing tobacco-using patients can do to improve their health.”

Bax will moderate an online roundtable discussion with statewide nurses on Friday, May 7 at noon, titled, “**Nurses Nix Nicotine: Nurses supporting tobacco dependence treatment.**” The Quitline invites healthcare professionals and the general public at large to attend this free event, held via WebEx, to celebrate National Nurses Week. Registration is available at the Quitline’s Online News Room at <https://www.nysmokefree.com/newsroom>.

The online roundtable discussion features four nurses throughout the state who are tobacco-free champions. They include:

- Rose Aulino, RN, CHMN, TTS, psychiatric nurse, Columbia County Mental Health Center
- Kathy Eliason, RN, MS, TTS, PPE nurse supervisor, Cayuga Medical Center
- Patricia Folan, RN, DNP, CTTS, director, Northwell Health Center for Tobacco Control
- Anne Lawton, RN, NCTTP, community outreach nurse, St. Peter’s Health Partners Cancer Care Centers

Aulino, Eliason and Lawton are all members of the Quitline’s Healthcare Professional Task Force, which informs the strategic initiatives of the Quitline’s Marketing and Outreach Team. Folan partners closely with the Quitline as one of the regional grantees with [Health Systems for a Tobacco-Free New York](#), part of the state’s comprehensive [Tobacco Control Program](#).

“Nurses not only heal and treat the sick, they provide a wealth of information to support wellness and encourage healthy behaviors,” said Folan. “At the bedside, in the ambulatory setting, as well as in the community, **nurses are in a unique position to treat tobacco dependence** – the leading cause of disease, disability and death in the U.S.”

Aulino plans to highlight the importance of referrals during the May 7 roundtable discussion. As a psychiatric nurse in the Hudson Valley Region and a trained tobacco treatment specialist, she knows firsthand how nurses effectively influence behavior change in patients. “Nurses are frontline experts in patient care, and as such, are **perfectly positioned to provide cessation services as well refer patients to the Quitline** prior to their discharge,” Aulino said.

The Quitline highly encourages all New York State nurses to refer tobacco-using patients to [nysmokefree.com](http://nysmokefree.com) or **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487). Quit Coaches are available seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. to empower tobacco users to identify triggers and develop personalized quit-plans. Most New York State residents qualify to receive a free starter supply of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) medication via mail. The Quitline likewise encourages nurses to provide their tobacco-using patients with a prescription for FDA-approved NRT, such as nicotine patches, nicotine gum and nicotine lozenges. A helpful dosing chart is available for reference at the [Quitline's website](#).

This National Nurses Week and every week, the Quitline appreciates and cherishes nurses' powerful role in helping New Yorkers become tobacco-free. Nurses are the frontline support for creating a healthier state and happier lives, and the Quitline is proud to partner with them to support tobacco dependence treatment.

### **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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