



NOTE TO MEDIA: Our press releases are available in downloadable PDF format at our Online News Room: <https://nysmokefree.com/newsroom>. The webpage also includes an Experts Database with healthcare professionals and researchers from every region of New York State. Please contact us anytime to arrange an interview with any of our experts and/or Success Story participants.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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- *Those with lower incomes represent the highest smoking rates in New York State*
- *Nearly 60% of NY Quitline participants currently report having lower incomes*
- *New online platform will expand reach of services to community-based organizations*

LOWER INCOMES IN NEW YORK STATE LINKED TO HIGHER CIGARETTE USAGE, GREATER HEALTH PROBLEMS

Increased numbers of people with lower incomes report participating in the New York State Quitline and receiving free resources to quit

BUFFALO, N.Y. – April 16, 2024 – For those with lower incomes in New York State, the grip of addiction to commercial tobacco* products is more harmful. Those with annual household incomes of \$25,000 or less smoke cigarettes at higher rates and [experience more severe health consequences from smoking](#). The [New York State Quitline](#) (NY Quitline) continues to provide free resources to all those who reside in the state and aims to improve access for people with lower incomes who seek to become smoke-free.

According to the [latest data from 2021](#), adults in New York State with lower incomes smoke cigarettes the most, even in comparison to other factors such as educational attainment, race/ethnicity and employment status. **One in five (20.4%) adults in New York State with annual household incomes of \$25,000 or less currently smoke, compared to approximately one in eight adults (12.0%) overall.**

Those with lower incomes in New York State also contact the NY Quitline the most for free resources and support. During the final three months of 2023, **59.4% of NY Quitline participants reported having annual household incomes of \$30,000 or less** – the highest such level since 2019.

“We know most people who smoke want to quit,” said Paula Celestino, the NY Quitline’s director of client relations and outreach. “The NY Quitline, which offers free support and stop-smoking medications, is a lifeline for many – especially those who need it most. Although we experience a relatively high percentage of participants who report having lower incomes, many encounter barriers to reach us for help. Through new programs and services in development, we aim to significantly increase the number of people we serve who face financial challenges and tobacco-related health inequities. Many people who have lower incomes also identify as being members of one or more minoritized groups.”

Celestino and her colleagues, based at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, N.Y., will assist community-based organizations and community healthcare programs through a **new online platform**. [Heart, Love & Soul](#), a social services agency in Niagara Falls, is one of the first organizations to adopt the model, which **more easily connects people to free NY Quitline services at the point-of-care**.

“For guests who visit us – whether for a warm meal, healthcare services, referrals for housing assistance or more – many of them smoke but want to quit,” said Lori Baeumler, community health nurse for Heart, Love & Soul. “Being able to share with them what’s available for free through the NY Quitline and register them for services is a real benefit. This program makes it easy for our guests to learn how to get free resources and starts them on a path to make a quit-attempt.”

More details about the NY Quitline’s new program will be forthcoming later in 2024. Beyond its assistance for community-based organizations, the NY Quitline continues to provide robust support for healthcare professionals to treat patients and clients. Tools include free educational [materials](#) available for download or mail order, on-demand [webinars](#), customized technical assistance and more.

Anyone may contact the NY Quitline by calling **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) seven days a week. They can also visit nysmokefree.com to connect with a specialist through an online chat, request a call-back or [order free nicotine replacement therapy medications](#). The NY Quitline also offers [Learn2QuitNY](#), a free texting program to quit smoking or vaping, by **texting QUITNOW to 333888**.

The NY Quitline encourages all those living in New York State to cut down cigarette use or quit altogether. If people you love have lower incomes and use commercial tobacco products, have them contact the NY Quitline for free resources to quit. Becoming smoke-free will improve countless aspects of their physical, emotional and financial well-being.

** The term tobacco throughout this press release refers to the use of manufactured, combustible commercial products and vape products – not the sacred, medicinal and traditional use of tobacco by Native American nations and other indigenous groups.*

About the New York State Quitline

The New York State 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 those who use commercial tobacco and vape products to talk with their healthcare professionals and access available Medicaid or health insurance benefits for medication support. 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. In addition, a text program for free quit support is available by texting QUITNOW to 333888. Visit www.nysmokefree.com for more information.

About Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

From the world's first chemotherapy research to the PSA prostate cancer biomarker, Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center generates innovations that shape how cancer is detected, treated and prevented worldwide. Driven to eliminate cancer's grip on humanity, the Roswell Park team of 4,000 makes compassionate, patient-centered cancer care and services accessible across New York State and beyond. Founded in 1898, Roswell Park was among the first three cancer centers nationwide to become a National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center and is the only one to hold this designation in Upstate New York. To learn more about Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Roswell Park Care Network, visit www.roswellpark.org, call 1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355) or email ASKRoswell@RoswellPark.org.

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