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- *Veterans are more likely to smoke and less likely to live in smoke-free homes*
- *Big Tobacco targets military personnel; many become addicted after enlisting*
- *Free nicotine replacement therapy and other resources are available for NYS veterans*

OVERCOMING CIGARETTES MAY BE ONE OF THE TOUGHEST BATTLES FOR A VETERAN

New York State Smokers' Quitline and other resources available to support former and current military members breaking tobacco addiction

BUFFALO, N.Y. – November 6, 2018 – The veterans page at *smokefree.gov* poignantly states: **"If you can make it in the military, you can quit smoking."** This Veterans Day, the New York State Smokers' Quitline reminds all former and current military personnel that free support is available to overcome tobacco addiction.

Unfortunately, statistics show that compared to nonveterans, veterans are:

- *More likely to smoke.* According to the CDC, 29 percent of male veterans aged 25 to 64 years reported being smokers, compared to 24 percent for nonveterans. The disparity was greatest for the age range of 45 to 54, at 36 percent for veterans and 24 percent for nonveterans.
- *Less likely to have smoke-free homes.* In a study published by the *American Journal of Public Health*, 79.7 percent of veterans live in a smoke-free home, compared to 84.4 percent of nonveterans.

- Particularly [targeted by Big Tobacco](#) to become smokers. According to the Truth Initiative, Big Tobacco has sponsored thousands of events for military personnel in recent decades, and 38 percent of military smokers pick up the habit *after* enlisting.

Because of these factors, veterans and their family members have an increased risk for lung cancer, heart disease, chronic bronchitis and many other diseases.

“In the military, you’re taught to build physical strength and be mentally tough to endure any battle. Cigarettes, small though they are, are among the deadliest of foes,” said Robert K. Lanier, Public Affairs Officer for Keller Army Community Hospital in West Point, N.Y. “The last thing we want is for our veterans to suffer from a debilitating addiction after so honorably serving our country. Overcoming smoking is a battle, but veterans do it every day with the right resources and a support system. They will find true strength with good health.”

Fortunately, help is available for veterans in New York State who would like to become tobacco-free. The [New York State Smokers’ Quitline](#) is a free resource, available seven days a week. Nearly all adults who call are eligible to receive a free starter kit of nicotine replacement therapy by mail. Quit Coaches screen callers for military status and have the training to provide personalized quit-plans around military-related issues. Quit Coaches not only offer coaching support but also will relay information about additional stop-smoking resources tailored to military personnel and veterans. Throughout 2017, the New York State Smokers’ Quitline assisted more than 1,400 state residents who reported either currently serving or having previously served in the military.

Nationally, the Veterans Administration and National Cancer Institute provide resources through their SmokefreeVET initiative, which includes customized tips at <https://smokefree.gov/veterans> and a text messaging program.

“Veterans made incredible sacrifices for our freedom – we can return the favor by providing them freedom from tobacco,” said Andrew Hyland, PhD, Chair of Health Behavior at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and Director of the New York State Smokers’ Quitline. “Encourage them to talk to their healthcare provider and to call the New York State Smokers’ Quitline at 1-866-NY-QUITS.”

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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***REMINDER TO MEDIA:** We encourage you to visit the Quitline's Online News Room at <http://www.nysmokefree.com/NewsRoom> for our latest updates and experts for stories.*