



*NOTE TO MEDIA:* Please contact us anytime to arrange an interview with any of our experts, tobacco control partners throughout New York State and/or Success Story participants. Our press releases are available in downloadable PDF format at our Online News Room: <https://nysmokefree.com/news-room>.

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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- *Deb P.'s story can provide inspiration for those wishing to become tobacco-free\* in the New Year*
- *71-year-old Bellport resident overcame cigarettes in July 2023 through the NYS Quitline*
- *NYS Quitline offers free support, including coaching, medications and texting programs*

## THIS NEW YEAR, RESOLVE TO BE TOBACCO-FREE WITH SUPPORT FROM THE NEW YORK STATE QUITLINE

*Deb P. of Long Island celebrates two and a half years of freedom from cigarettes, is living proof it is never too late to become tobacco-free*



**Dec. 30, 2025** – With the start of 2026 comes another opportunity to tackle life's resolutions. For many New York State residents, overcoming nicotine addiction and becoming tobacco-free\* will be a top priority. The [New York State Quitline](#) (NYS Quitline) reminds everyone free support is available seven days a week and thousands of people achieve success each year. Deb P. (*pictured*), a 71-year-old resident of Bellport on Long Island, is a "Success Story" and can offer inspiration for anyone trying to quit.

Deb remembers being curious about smoking during her teenage years. At age 15 while sitting along a brook with her cousin, she tried a cigarette. Like many people who became lured to try smoking at a young age, Deb now wishes she had never taken a puff.

"I started smoking full-time by age 16," Deb recalled. "I tried quitting on many occasions throughout my life, but it felt like nothing ever worked. I even tried hypnotism. I regularly smoked a pack or more each day and I just didn't have faith in myself that I could quit."

In the spring of 2023, just seven months shy of reaching 70, Deb was suffering from double

pneumonia and had difficulty walking and breathing. Even with her poor health, Deb found it difficult not to smoke.

“It was right around that time I saw a commercial for the NYS Quitline,” Deb said. “I saw a man struggling from the effects of smoking, and it made me cringe. But I also thought about how my grandson hesitated to hug me because of my cigarette smell.”

Deb decided to contact the NYS Quitline for support. The free nicotine replacement therapy medications she received and follow-up calls from Quit Coaches were life-changing.

“I had never tried the patches before – they were free and they worked,” Deb said. “Also, getting encouragement from the Quit Coaches was eye-opening. I began to realize that quitting required major life changes, especially to overcome the mental aspects of having cigarettes during certain activities. But I made my decision to quit, stuck with it, and had the Quitline and family to support me every step of the way.”

Deb turns 72 in January 2026 and feels more rejuvenated than ever. She is a fan of pickleball and plays three or four times a week. Now tobacco-free since July of 2023, Deb no longer smells like cigarettes – something her grandson very much appreciates.

“My hugs with him feel more genuine and we’ve strengthened our relationship,” she said. “Looking back, it felt like I used to have to take smoke breaks all the time; now I’m open to doing more things. It’s never too late to quit. You’ve just got to fully commit. Try again, because the last time’s the charm!”

Anyone seeking assistance to become tobacco-free may contact the NYS Quitline by calling **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487). They can also visit [nysmokefree.com](https://nysmokefree.com) to reach a specialist through an online chat, request a call-back or [order free nicotine replacement therapy medications](#). The NYS Quitline additionally offers [free text-support programs](#) by visiting [www.DropTheVape.org](http://www.DropTheVape.org) and by **texting QUITNOW** (English) or **DÉJELO YA NY** (Spanish) to **333888**.

The NYS Quitline encourages all New York State residents to try – or try again – to become tobacco-free in 2026. More “Success Stories” like Deb’s are available at a new webpage, [www.nysmokefree.com/success-stories](https://www.nysmokefree.com/success-stories). The stories, which are searchable by primary reason for quitting, type of tobacco product overcome, location and age can offer inspiration to never give up and reclaim healthier living.

*\* The term tobacco throughout this press release refers to the use of manufactured, combustible commercial products and electronic/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 supported by 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 NYS Quitline encourages those who use commercial tobacco and electronic/vape products to talk with their healthcare professionals and access available Medicaid or health insurance benefits for medication support. Confidential texting programs with weekly guidance for skill-building are available by texting QUITNOW (English) or DÉJELO YA NY (Spanish) to 333888 or by visiting [www.DropTheVape.org](http://www.DropTheVape.org). All those who live in New York State can contact the NYS Quitline seven days a week for free coaching and resources by calling 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) or by visiting [www.nysmokefree.com](http://www.nysmokefree.com).

### **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. The Roswell Park team of 4,000+ makes compassionate, patient-centered cancer care and services accessible across New York State and beyond. Rated "Exceptional" by the National Cancer Institute, Roswell Park, founded in 1898, was one of the first NCI-designated comprehensive cancer centers in the country and remains the only one in Upstate New York. To learn more about Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Roswell Park Care Network, visit [www.roswellpark.org](http://www.roswellpark.org), call 1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355) or email [ASKRoswell@RoswellPark.org](mailto:ASKRoswell@RoswellPark.org).

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