



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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- Ashley D.'s story can provide inspiration for those wishing to become tobacco-free* in the New Year
- 37-year-old Derby resident overcame cigarettes in July 2024 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

Ashley D. of Western New York celebrates a year and a half of freedom from cigarettes; also overcame autoimmune diseases, blindness and liver failure



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. Ashley D. (*pictured*), a 37-year-old resident of Derby in Western New York, is a "Success Story" and can offer inspiration for anyone trying to quit.

At just 37 years old, Ashley has experienced more traumatic health concerns than some people do in an entire lifetime. She had a thyroidectomy from autoimmune conditions such as Graves' disease and Hashimoto's disease, nearly lost her vision and also overcame a diagnosis of end-stage liver failure. One health concern, however, was preventable.

"Even with a lifetime of autoimmune diseases, I smoked cigarettes," Ashley said. "After everything I endured, I clung to something I thought was part of my identity."

In Ashley's view, it was a "small moment" that finally led to a "big life change" of ending 20 years of smoking. After she overcame liver failure but developed muscle atrophy, she needed surgery to improve skin elasticity. To get the surgery, however, she first had to become tobacco-free.

"Doctors have told me I'm an anomaly and keep miraculously surviving, but I think quitting smoking was my hardest battle," Ashley said. "Fortunately, it was also the shortest battle. Once I got through three very tough days without a cigarette, I started to feel free."

Ashley relied both on her faith in God as well as helpful tips from the NYS Quitline's website. She said she regularly viewed *nysmokefree.com* for guidance to create and stick to a plan as well as reminders to distract herself when cigarette cravings occurred.

"Especially during those first three days, I cleaned the walls quite a bit and used free nicotine lozenges from the Quitline to overcome oral fixation," Ashley said. "Addiction robs you of reality and it's tough to overcome it alone. I would tell anyone trying to quit to remember that life will soon change so much for the better – just stick to your plan."

Ashley's overall health has improved dramatically since becoming tobacco-free in July of 2024. She feels like she has more time to spend with family and has taken up hobbies such as puzzles and decorating her new home in Derby with her partner, Zack.

"Becoming tobacco-free has put me in a different world, with more time to do things and more control over my life," Ashley said. "I can give my nieces and nephews hugs without worrying about getting secondhand smoke on their precious skin. There's no more sneaking away at movies for smoke breaks. There's no more spraying myself with perfumes before I enter my parents' house for a visit. I've been through a lot in life, but the experience of quitting smoking also taught me you don't need a big 'life event' to make a big life change – just faith, support and determination."

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 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 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 Ashley’s are available at a new webpage, 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. 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.

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, call 1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355) or email ASKRoswell@RoswellPark.org.

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