



***NOTE TO MEDIA:** Nearly a dozen "Success Stories" and downloadable photos for different regions of New York State are available at the Quitline's Online News Room: <https://nysmokefree.com/newsroom>. Inspirational New Yorkers became nicotine-free in 2020 for a variety of reasons: COVID-19 concerns, the birth of a child, improved health, battling cancer and much more. Please reach out to the Quitline any time, any day, for supplemental interviews to enhance your coverage of New Year's resolutions and stories of hope heading into 2021.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact

Tony Astran, MPA, APR, TTS
New York State Smokers' Quitline
716-982-2088 (cell)
anthony.astran@roswellpark.org

ROCHESTER-AREA MAN PROVIDES INSPIRATION TO BECOME NICOTINE-FREE IN 2021

Despite the challenges of 2020, Mike H. overcame addictions to smoking and vaping with support from the New York State Smokers' Quitline

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – Dec. 31, 2020 – Mike H. of suburban Rochester doesn't consider his nicotine-free success story as "anything special." But this accomplishment by the Greece, N.Y. father of two 5-year-olds is no small feat – especially during the middle of the



COVID-19 pandemic. Mike is celebrating four months and counting of a healthier smoke-free and vape-free lifestyle thanks to support from the New York State Smokers' Quitline (Quitline).

Mike (*pictured at left*), 37, first began smoking 20 years ago to "fit in and be rebellious." As the years passed, he intended to quit many times and was never successful for any significant length of time. Later in life, he switched to vaping – only to learn he developed an addiction to nicotine. Mike knew he needed a plan and outside support if he wanted to become healthier.

"I always knew I'd have to quit at some point – I can't stay 'young and invincible' forever," he said. "First and foremost, I wanted to become nicotine-free for my kids. My family offers fantastic support, but I also needed other people to keep pushing me in the right direction, too. The Quitline did just that."

Upon consulting the Quitline in September and then receiving free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) in the form of nicotine patches and nicotine gum via mail, Mike felt empowered to become nicotine-free. "Having another person motivate me on the other end of the phone felt good," he said. "The Quit Coaches seem like they genuinely care about people's success in quitting. They especially helped me think about ways to eliminate triggers, such as thoroughly cleaning the inside of my car."

Mike has a limited budget for his family, so he appreciates the cost-savings the Quitline provided by mailing free NRT. Today, he experiences additional savings through no longer purchasing cigarettes or vape products. Mike feels less stress in his life, especially in terms of thinking when and where he'll have to smoke or vape each day. He also finds exercising to be easier and more enjoyable than ever. Looking back, Mike thinks the extra support he received from the Quitline made all the difference in achieving a nicotine-free lifestyle.

"Without a support system, it can feel like you might as well keep smoking or vaping because no cares if you quit," Mike said. "The first few days of quitting can be the hardest, and setting a finite quit-date can feel scary at first – but I think the important thing is to make your decision and stick to it. Use every tool around you and find what works. Your next attempt could be the one that sticks for good."

The Quitline encourages all tobacco and vape-product users to make 2021 their best year ever by becoming nicotine-free, especially in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. According to the CDC, those who smoke [suffer more severe effects](#) if infected with the coronavirus.

The Quitline recommends tobacco and vape-product users consult a healthcare professional as part of a nicotine-free journey. Healthcare professionals can provide referrals to the Quitline for free quit-coaching and free NRT such as nicotine patches and nicotine gum or lozenges – and nearly all participants are eligible. The Quitline's Quit Coaches are available seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. by calling 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) beginning at 9 a.m. or by visiting www.nysmokefree.com and requesting a call.

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 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.

#