



***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

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HUDSON VALLEY REGION YOUNG ADULT PROVIDES INSPIRATION TO BECOME NICOTINE-FREE IN 2021

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

HUDSON VALLEY REGION, N.Y. – Dec. 31, 2020 – For Kyle K. of Monroe, N.Y., the COVID-19 pandemic wasn't going to get in the way of his desire to turn his life around in 2020. He first took on the monumental challenge of overcoming drug and alcohol dependence early in the year. Then, to further improve his health, he contacted the New York State Smokers' Quitline (Quitline) to put an end to both smoking and vaping.



Kyle (*pictured at left*), 28, started smoking during his junior year of high school and took up vaping at age 21 – years before its heightened popularity. Vaping not only was an addiction but also a longtime hobby for Kyle, as he enjoyed creating his own vape juice. Of the numerous changes he made this year to improve his health, he is most proud of becoming nicotine-free because he thought it would be the hardest feat to accomplish.

"I recognize how tough the COVID-19 pandemic has been for many, but for me the added time indoors helped me focus on bettering myself physically and mentally," Kyle said. "Once I overcame drugs and alcohol, I knew vaping and the occasional cigarette were doing my body harm. I thought to myself 'why not quit these too' and contacted the Quitline, thanks to a referral from Dr. Ramzi Tawil of Crystal Run Healthcare in Middletown."

Upon consulting the Quitline in early October and then receiving free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) in the form of nicotine patches and nicotine gum via mail, Kyle felt empowered to become nicotine-free. He eventually weaned off NRT products and now turns to an on-hand stash of lollipops whenever a rare nicotine craving suddenly arises.

Kyle considers himself lucky to be surrounded by family and friends who offer positive support and have encouraged him every step of the way to make lasting changes in his life. Today, instead of making vape juice and engaging in other unproductive behaviors, he regularly exercises and meditates. He also purchased a special bracelet that reads "Progress, Not Perfection" and wears it daily to remind himself not only of his accomplishments but also to continue to take life one day at a time.

"I feel better, I no longer smell like smoke and my lungs no longer hurt," Kyle said. "It is wonderful to be nicotine-free and I hope my story can help others facing similar situations."

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.

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