



***NOTE TO MEDIA:** Our press releases are available in downloadable PDF format at our Online News Room: <https://nysmokefree.com/newsroom>. The webpage also includes an Experts Database with healthcare professionals and researchers from every region of New York State. Please contact us anytime to arrange an interview with any of our experts and/or our past Success Story participants.*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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- *The use and harm of commercial tobacco products disproportionately affect Native Nations*
- *Those from Indigenous populations are less likely to try quitting smoking*
- *NY Quitline and Roswell Park offer services to bolster Indigenous health*

## **SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR NEW YORK STATE'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO QUIT COMMERCIAL TOBACCO**

*New York State Smokers' Quitline offers free and confidential assistance*

**Oct. 30, 2023** – This November during Native American Heritage Month, communities throughout New York State will celebrate the culture and traditions of Indigenous peoples. Yet, a disproportionate number of those from Native Nations experience adverse health resulting from commercial tobacco use. Specialists with the New York State Smokers' Quitline (NY Quitline) are ready to assist members of Native Nations and all who live throughout the state with free and confidential resources to quit.

The NY Quitline recognizes the important difference between commercial tobacco products and the sacred, medicinal and traditional use of tobacco by many Native Nations. According to the landmark [2020 Surgeon General's Report on Smoking Cessation](#), nearly one in four adults categorized as American Indian / Alaska Native smoke commercial cigarettes. This population also presents some of the lowest rates for past year quit attempts (52%), interest in quitting (56%) and receiving a healthcare professional's advice to quit (38%).

“It’s important members of Indigenous communities use as many resources as possible to quit smoking, in addition to the support they receive from Indian Health Service programs on reservations, territories and urban centers,” said Dr. Rodney Haring, chair of Indigenous cancer health at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center (Roswell Park) in Buffalo, N.Y. “Roswell Park is expanding its culturally adapted tobacco-related cessation training resources with scholarships to and for tribes and ally organizations working with Indigenous populations across New York.”



Members of Indigenous populations disproportionately experience harms from commercial cigarette smoking. [According to the CDC](#), among Indigenous populations, cardiovascular disease represents the leading cause of death and lung cancer represents the leading cause of cancer deaths. Locally, Dr. Haring’s [newly formed department](#) and researchers with the NY Quitline are collaborating to develop a [tobacco treatment specialist program](#) specifically geared toward serving Indigenous populations. Earlier this year, they developed a broader support service called the [Indigenous & Rural Patient Navigation Program](#). Specialists at 1-888-RPGUIDE (1-888-774-8433) provide tailored linkages for cancer screenings and survivorship services in local settings.

“The NY Quitline knows everyone quits differently, and our trained specialists deeply understand how important it is that our participants feel respected and understood,” said Dr. Andrew Hyland, chair of health behavior at Roswell Park and director of the NY Quitline. “Trust is key. We want those from Native Nations and all New York State residents to know we’re always here with free resources and caring, confidential support. Stopping commercial tobacco use is the most important thing to improve health.”

Trained tobacco treatment specialists at the NY Quitline provide quit coaching and access to free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) medications via phone at **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487). In addition, at [nysmokefree.com](http://nysmokefree.com), participants can connect with a specialist through an online chat, request a call-back, [order free NRT medications](#), and register for the six-week [Learn2QuitNY](#) text messaging program.

The NY Quitline wishes all members of New York State’s Native Nations – the Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Saint Regis Mohawk, Seneca, Shinnecock, Tonawanda Seneca, Tuscarora, Unkechaugi – and all who are Indigenous a joyous Native American Heritage

Month. We also extend our gratitude to Indigenous urban centers and landscapes for their vital role in bolstering health, such as Native American Community Services of Erie & Niagara Counties, Inc. and the American Indian Community House in New York City. The NY Quitline remains available to support all who seek freedom from commercial tobacco and vape products while on the path to better health.

### **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 those who use commercial tobacco and vape products to talk with their healthcare professionals and access available Medicaid or health insurance benefits for medication support. All New York State residents can call 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) or text QUITNOW to 333888 for coaching and resources, free of charge, seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. Visit [www.nysmokefree.com](http://www.nysmokefree.com) for more information.

### **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. Driven to eliminate cancer's grip on humanity, the Roswell Park team of 4,000 makes compassionate, patient-centered cancer care and services accessible across New York State and beyond. Founded in 1898, Roswell Park was among the first three cancer centers nationwide to become a National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center and is the only one to hold this designation 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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