

NEWS RELEASE

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Help to Quit Smoking Available Statewide *Free Nicotine Replacement Therapy for Georgians*

ATLANTA –The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is providing help to Georgians who want to quit smoking and stop using tobacco products. With grant money from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, DPH is offering a four-week supply of free Nicotine Replacement Therapy to all Georgia tobacco users aged 18 and older. Along with the American Cancer Society and the *Great American Smokeout*, DPH is urging Georgians to quit smoking not just for the day, but for life.

More than 1.5 million Georgians aged 18 and older smoke cigarettes. Another 317,000 adults in Georgia use some form of smokeless tobacco like chewing tobacco, snuff, or snus. And recent data shows that tobacco use is increasing among Georgia teens and young adults putting even more lives at risk for cancer. Smoking costs Georgians \$1.8 billion in direct healthcare costs every year and \$3.2 billion in lost productivity.

“Tobacco use is the number one preventable cause of death in Georgia,” says Jean O’Connor, Dr. PH., director of the Health Promotion & Disease Prevention section in the Georgia Department of Public Health. “Every year in Georgia, more than 10,000 people die from smoke related illnesses – that’s more than alcohol, cocaine and heroin, AIDS, murders, suicides, auto accidents and fires combined.”

The free Nicotine Replacement Therapy medication comes in the form of patches and gum. Georgians who use tobacco and are ready to quit, can contact the Georgia Tobacco Quit Line at 1-877-270-STOP (7867) for the free therapies. The Georgia Tobacco Quit Line provides free and confidential, professional tobacco cessation telephone and web-based counseling to all Georgia tobacco users ages 13 and older including pregnant and postpartum women. Since 2001, the Georgia Tobacco Quit Line has helped nearly 95,000 Georgians in their attempts to stop smoking.

Georgia adults who use any form of tobacco are encouraged to speak to their healthcare provider or pharmacist for additional support and information about safe, effective and appropriate medication treatment options to assist with quitting tobacco. The Quit Line is available 24 hours a day and seven days a week.



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About the Georgia Department of Public Health

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is the lead agency in preventing disease, injury and disability; promoting health and well-being; and preparing for and responding to disasters from a health perspective. In 2011, the General Assembly restored DPH to its own state agency after more than 30 years of consolidation with other departments. At the state level, DPH functions through numerous divisions, sections, programs and offices. Locally, DPH funds and collaborates with Georgia's 159 county health departments and 18 public health districts. Through the changes, the mission has remained constant – to protect the lives of all Georgians. Today, DPH's main functions include: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Maternal and Child Health, Infectious Disease and Immunization, Environmental Health, Epidemiology, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Emergency Medical Services, Pharmacy, Nursing, Volunteer Health Care, the Office of Health Equity, Vital Records, and the State Public Health Laboratory. For more information about DPH, visit www.dph.ga.gov.