



NASW PRACTICE ALERT

**Quitlines for Tobacco Cessation:
A Compliment to Social Work**

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NASW & CDC Partnership. Since 2016, NASW has partnered with the CDC [Tips From Former Smokers Campaign](#) to highlight the importance of smoking cessation services and encourage social workers to integrate interventions into their work. Social workers are well-suited to discuss the health consequences of smoking with clients and deliver tobacco cessation interventions, as outlined in NASW's 2017 Practice Perspectives [Implementing Smoking Cessation Into Your Social Work Practice](#).

Why use Quitlines. Today there are many accessible resources that can help clients achieve their goal to stop smoking. One in particular is the national quitline **1-800-QUIT-NOW**. Quitlines are generally available 24-7 and provide free support and resources. Quitlines can serve as a first step to connect clients to assistance, and they enhance resources available to clients who are actively working towards tobacco cessation.

NASW encourages social workers to inform clients who use tobacco products about 1-800-QUIT-NOW. The [United States Preventive Services Task Force](#) (USPSTF) recommends that all adults should be asked about tobacco use and provided cessation interventions if they use tobacco products. USPSTF endorses the use of quitlines to improve tobacco cessation rates.

Direct provider referrals are also accepted by quitlines in many states through email, fax or electronic health records. Depending on state statutes, updates on patient progress may be available to referring providers. Social workers should seek a client's written permission when making a referral.

Initial Call/Contact. If you have not called a quitline number yourself, it is helpful to know how they function and what can be provided. When an individual calls the toll free quitline number, which is a national portal, the call is routed to the state line. Typically a person-- *not a*

recording!--- answers the call. Callers initially go through a screening process for their specific needs to be determined. The information they provide is confidential. Citizenship information is not asked. Though it depends on the vendor operating the quitline, many systems are HIPAA compliant. Once a caller's service needs are understood and their call is directed appropriately, their personal information is disaggregated.

Quitlines provide services in Spanish and Asian languages. Spanish services are accessible through **1-855-DEJEO-YA**. Phone numbers to access support in Chinese, Korean or Vietnamese are listed at <http://www.asiansmokersquitline.org>. Translation services are available for over 140 other languages through a third party service.

What services are provided? Quitline counselors are trained to use Motivational Interviewing and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy principles to focus on behavior change. Counselors are available to talk through tobacco use behaviors in detail and plan for a person to take steps to quit. Counselors may have an educational background in a behavioral health field or be trained in delivering evidence-based interventions. Many states also allow quitlines to provide medication, such as mailing nicotine patches to someone's home. Otherwise, quitline staff can direct clients to local resources to obtain medication.

Over 330,000 people access services through state quitlines each year and they help individuals to successfully quit tobacco products. Research studies have shown that individuals who make contact with the quitline three or more times are more likely to stop using tobacco. While individuals can reach out to the quitline as many times as needed, some quitlines take a proactive approach and make follow up phone calls as well.

An extra support. Quitlines are now an established part of the continuum of care. They provide free, confidential resources that social workers can offer to clients to enhance support to quit using tobacco products. The North American Quitline Consortium offers a wealth of information and data about quitlines. Details about hours, eligibility criteria, services and provider referral processes from each state quitline are available at <http://map.naquitline.org/>. The site also provides metrics on the number of calls received and quit rates.

Additional Resources

- Quit Resources <https://smokefree.gov/>
- Centers for Disease Control Quit Smoking https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/index.htm
- North American Quitline Consortium <https://www.naquitline.org/>

- The Community Guide Summary Evidence
<https://www.thecommunityguide.org/findings/tobacco-use-and-secondhand-smoke-exposure-quitline-interventions>
- UCSF Smoking Cessation Leadership Center
<https://smokingcessationleadership.ucsf.edu/>
- NASW Practice Resources <http://www.socialworkers.org/Practice>