

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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New Initiative Inspires Tobacco Users in Collier County to Quit and Tell

Tobacco Free Collier raises awareness about free quit services during Tobacco Free Florida Week

Naples – The Florida Department of Health’s Tobacco Free Florida Program and Tobacco Free Collier are launching a new initiative called *Quit and Tell* to celebrate Collier residents who have quit tobacco and inspire more people to join them.

The *Quit and Tell* initiative launch aligns with the seventh annual Tobacco Free Florida Week from April 27 to May 3. It is part of a statewide effort to raise awareness about the 3 Free & Easy Ways to Quit available to help Floridians. These free and proven-effective services can double a tobacco user’s chances of quitting.

Collier resident Andrea McKinney recently shared her story. “Towards the end of my quitting, I remember holding a cigarette in my hand, debating if I should light it up since I was trying to quit. The internal dialog in my head was really ridiculous (if you’ve ever tried to quit, you know about this internal conversation you have with yourself... it’s almost nutty!) I ended up lighting up, taking a drag, and thinking, ‘I cannot believe how much control this stupid cigarette has over me. And I cannot believe I allow this stupid stick of tobacco to control my thoughts and actions... I like having that control now that I’ve quit.’ ” She continued, “Whether you quit cold turkey in a sprint, or over time in a marathon, the finish line is always in front of you. And if it’s something you want enough, you’ll get there! Just keep going.”

More than 126,000 Floridians have already successfully quit using one of the 3 Ways to Quit. These free services help tobacco users create comprehensive and personalized quit plans. Free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), like the patch or a combination of the patch and nicotine gum for heavy smokers, is available while supplies last and if medically appropriate.

Since Tobacco Free Florida launched in 2007, there has been significant progress in reducing the number of smokers in the state. The most current cigarette smoking rate among adults in Florida is 16.8 percent¹ - a rate lower than the national average of 19 percent.² Of those current smokers in the state, approximately 1.7 million want to quit.^{3,4,5}

“Quitting tobacco can be difficult, but it is not impossible and Tobacco Free Florida’s free services can greatly improve one’s chances,” said Tobacco Free Florida Bureau Chief Shannon Hughes. “In fact, there are more former smokers than current smokers in the state. We are encouraging Floridians to share their success stories to inspire others to do the same.”

Tobacco Free Florida’s 3 Ways to Quit include:

- **CALL:** Call the Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach® who will help you assess your addiction and help you create a personalized quit plan.

- CLICK: Tobacco Free Florida's online cessation tool can be accessed at tobaccofreeflorida.com/webcoach.
- COME IN: Sign up for group classes at your local Area Health Education Center (AHEC) by calling toll free 877.819.2357 or visiting www.ahectobacco.com/classes-by-county.

There are plenty of reasons to quit. Quitting smoking can add up to 10 years to one's life expectancy.⁶ The health benefits of quitting smoking begin almost immediately after one's last cigarette and continue for years if one quits for good. Share your story. Join the conversation on social media using #QuitAndTell. To Quit and Tell, please visit tobaccofreeflorida.com/quitandtell.

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ABOUT TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA WEEK

The seventh annual Tobacco Free Florida Week takes place from April 27 – May 3. Join the conversation on social media using #QuitAndTell. To *Quit and Tell*, please visit tobaccofreeflorida.com/quitandtell.

ABOUT TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA

The department's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of the state's three ways to quit. Since 2007, more than 126,000 Floridians have successfully quit, using one of these free services. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida and the state's free quit resources, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or on Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.floridahealth.gov.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Prevalence and Trends Data, 2013. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Prevalence and Trends Data, 2013. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.

³ 15,524,970 Florida adults: Florida QuickStats. U.S. Census Bureau. U.S. Department of Commerce <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/12000.html>

⁴ 16.8 percent (or 2,608,195) Florida adults smoke were current cigarettes: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Prevalence and Trends Data, 2013. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.

⁵ 68.8 percent (1,794,438) report they want to quit: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Quitting Smoking Among Adults—United States, 2001–2010. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2011;60(44):1513–19

⁶ Jha P, Ramasundarahettige C, Landsman V, Rostrom B, Thun M, Anderson RN, McAfee T, Peto R. 21st Century Hazards of Smoking and Benefits of Cessation in the United States. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 2013;368(4):341–50 [accessed 2014 Nov 26].