



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Governor Ehrlich Announces Launch of Tobacco Quitline *Program Is Designed to Help Increase Smoking Cessation*

ANNAPOLIS, MD (July 5, 2006) -- Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) today announced the launch of the first statewide tobacco Quitline to help Marylanders quit smoking with greater success.

“Quitting smoking is one of the most important health decisions an individual can make,” Governor Ehrlich said. “The Quitline provides those who want to quit with the tools and support they need to do so.”

The toll-free Quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), provides free, proactive, telephone-based counseling sessions led by “Quit Coaches”™, as well as individually-tailored quit plans for any Maryland resident who wants to quit smoking.

“Telephone quit lines have been very successful in other states,” said DHMH Secretary S. Anthony McCann. “I am pleased the State is able to offer this new service to the thousands of Marylanders who are ready to stop smoking. Our goal is to make Maryland a healthier, better place to live.”

Participants may call the Quitline to speak with a Quit Coach as many times as needed. The service is available seven days a week, from 8:00 a.m. to midnight.

Quit Coaches are highly-trained tobacco treatment specialists – many of whom are former smokers – who are professionals in psychology, counseling and other health care fields. Through 1-800-QUIT-NOW, Quit Coaches provide helpful quitting tips and techniques, and offer ongoing support throughout the quitting process. Callers may also be referred to existing cessation programs run by Maryland’s 24 local health departments.

More than 75 percent of Maryland adult smokers have expressed a desire to quit smoking, according to the most recent Maryland Tobacco Survey.

To promote the Quitline, DHMH is launching a newly redesigned Web site - www.smokingstopshere.com - and a community advertising campaign. The Quitline is the most recent addition to Maryland’s comprehensive statewide tobacco use cessation program.

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