

American Cancer Society Launches Quitline Program in India

Quitline Service to be Offered to Multi-National Corporations

Atlanta 2008/12/10 -The American Cancer Society today announced that it is launching its Quitline service in India. The program will be provided through multi-national employers with operations in India. The Society's Quitline program is a clinically proven, free telephone-based counseling service that provides counseling and pharmacological service to more than 100 employers and health plans and 13 states in the U.S. Since its inception in 2000, Quitline has provided counseling support to more than 380,000 individuals. Research has shown that participating in telephone counseling and using medications can more than double a smoker's chance of quitting for good.

"We are pleased to be the first provider of a tobacco cessation counseling service in India, and we look forward to providing the supportive services that help tobacco users to quit," said Terry Music, chief mission officer, American Cancer Society. "India became smoke-free on October 2, making this a perfect time for employers to offer Quitline services to their workers. We know that smoke-free laws can help those who use tobacco quit, and in combination with Quitline, we can help individuals succeed in becoming tobacco-free."

Quitting smoking is hard, and support makes it more likely that smokers who quit will remain tobacco-free. The American Cancer Society's Quitline has a proven track record with helping people quit in the United States. Studies have shown that more than 40 percent of people who were contacted six months after completing the American Cancer Society Quitline program remained smoke-free, which puts the Society's quit rates among the highest of those providing this service.

Quitting smoking can greatly improve health. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, people who quit, regardless of age, live longer than people who continue to smoke, and smokers who quit before age 50 cut their risk of dying in the next 15 years in half compared to those who continue to smoke. Cigarette smoking is by far the most important risk factor in lung cancer. Quitting smoking substantially decreases the risk of lung cancer as well as laryngeal, esophageal, oral, pancreatic, bladder and cervical cancers. Quitting also lowers risk for other major diseases including heart and stroke.

India provides a unique challenge regarding tobacco use and quitting – while as many as one-third of Indians smoke tobacco in several forms, a great many Indians also use a far greater array of smokeless tobacco products. In fact, a recent report of the Indian government cited tobacco use prevalence (in all its forms) at nearly half of all adult males and about 14 percent of women. The effect of these various forms of tobacco use in India has not only caused lung cancer incidence to grow significantly in recent years but has also caused India to have the highest rates of oral cancer in the world. The Quitline will be addressing these India-specific issues as it develops its treatment protocols in collaboration with its multi-national employer partners.

For more information on the American Cancer Society's Quitline services for multi-national employers, please visit www.acsworkplacesolutions.com.

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States. For more information anytime, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

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