



***NOTE TO MEDIA:** Please contact us if you would like to connect with any of the experts for a follow-up interview. This story and additional reports are available at our Online News Room by visiting <https://www.nysmokefree.com/NewsRoom>.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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- *Tobacco and vape users can no longer purchase products in NYS pharmacies*
- *Pharmacists play an integral role in helping patients quit smoking and vaping*
- *The NYS Smokers' Quitline works with pharmacies statewide such as those at Tops Friendly Markets, Kinney Drugs and Wegmans on proactive cessation measures*

NEW LAW FOR NEW YORK STATE PHARMACIES COULD LEAD TO MORE PEOPLE QUITTING SMOKING

As of May 18, 2020, tobacco and vape sales are prohibited in NYS pharmacies

BUFFALO, N.Y. – May 20, 2020 – May 18, 2020 marked a new day for public health in New York State. Per a [new law](#) passed earlier this year, **sales of tobacco and vapor products are now prohibited in pharmacies**. The change could be a catalyst for increased quit-attempts among state residents. That's good news for the New York State Smokers' Quitline (Quitline).

The Quitline provides free evidence-based coaching for all of New York State as well as a starter supply of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) – including patches, gum and lozenges – for eligible participants. In addition, the Quitline and [Health Systems for a Tobacco-Free New York](#) regional contractors assist pharmacies statewide by providing cessation education to pharmacists and supporting their patients with quit-attempts.

One organization the Quitline partners with is **Tops Friendly Markets**, a Williamsville N.Y.-based regional grocery chain with [pharmacies](#) in more than 50 of its locations throughout Western and Central New York. Each pharmacy is connected to the Quitline's [Patient Referral Program](#), which provides additional support to help pharmacists track patient outcomes.

"With the new law taking effect, our customers may be turning to us for added support to quit smoking or vaping," said Jamie Keller, PharmD, clinical pharmacy specialist with Tops. "We're here to promote health, and anyone 18 years or older can continue to purchase NRT at our pharmacies. We encourage our customers to consult our pharmacists about the different FDA-approved medications available and learn more about additional resources available such as the Quitline."

Kinney Drugs, a Gouverneur, N.Y.-based pharmacy chain with nearly 100 locations in Central and Northern New York as well as nearby Vermont, took a proactive approach beginning in 2014 to comprehensively train all its pharmacists to provide pharmacotherapy and counseling for tobacco-using patients. Shannon Miller, PharmD, BCPS, CDE, director of patient outcomes, said the training is part of Kinney's ["Ready. Set. Quit."](#) smoking cessation program.

"Ultimately, this law moves New York State pharmacies much closer to our mission of helping people stay well through healthy habits," Miller said. "While some customers may initially be frustrated about no longer being able to purchase tobacco products at pharmacies, we hope the new law may be an impetus to get them to think about quitting."

Ted Dennee, wellness strategies manager for **Wegmans**, a multi-state chain supermarket with 47 locations across New York State, understands the important role pharmacists play in tobacco cessation efforts. Dennee works with [Roswell Park Cessation Services \(RPCS\)](#) – the program that administers the New York State Smokers' Quitline – to promote smoking cessation among Wegmans' tobacco-using team members.

"Wegmans took a stand back in 2008 to not allow tobacco products in its stores," Dennee said. "We believe we can be stewards of good health, especially at our in-store [pharmacies](#). Quitting smoking is the very best thing tobacco users can do to improve their health. That's one reason we partnered back in 2013 with RPCS to create [Wegmans QuitClub](#), an added resource to give smokers the best possible odds to take back their health. The new law is another great step in that direction, and we applaud the efforts by our state government to make it happen."

Quit Coaches are available seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. at 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) to help all New York State residents overcome nicotine dependency with smoking and vaping. The Quitline recommends pharmacists connect to the Quitline's [Patient Referral Program](#) to provide their tobacco-using patients added support, including a personalized quit-plan. Quitline experts can also offer customized training to help individual pharmacists and organizations become better equipped for coaching patients. Contact information is available at the Quitline's Online News Room, located at <https://nysmokefree.com/newsroom>.

About the New York State Smokers' Quitline

The New York State Smokers' Quitline is a service of the New York State Department of Health and based at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, N.Y. It is one of the first and busiest state quitlines in the nation and has responded to nearly 3 million calls since it began operating in 2000. The Quitline encourages nicotine users to talk with their healthcare professionals and access available Medicaid or health insurance benefits for stop-smoking medications. All New York State residents can call **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) for coaching and resources, free of charge, seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. Visit www.nysmokefree.com for more information.

About Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center is a community united by the drive to eliminate cancer's grip on humanity by unlocking its secrets through personalized approaches and unleashing the healing power of hope. Founded by Dr. Roswell Park in 1898, it is the only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center in Upstate New York. Learn more at www.roswellpark.org, or contact us at 1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355) or ASKRoswell@roswellpark.org.

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