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- *Shirley G. quit smoking in November with support from the New York State Smokers' Quitline*
- *Coaching, medication and positive reinforcement helped Shirley G. finally quit for good*
- *Even after just six weeks of being smoke-free, the benefits are dramatic and palpable*

NICOTINE PATCH AND QUITLINE SUPPORT HELP FIVE BOROUGHES WOMAN BECOME SMOKE-FREE

Bronx resident Shirley G. wants to be an inspiration to those looking to quit smoking for the New Year



BUFFALO, N.Y. – Dec. 21, 2018 – As the New Year approaches, a common resolution tops many tobacco-users' to-do lists: making 2019 the year they finally quit for good. Smoking is an addiction and difficult to overcome, but thousands achieve a smoke-free life each year with support and medication from their healthcare providers and the New York State Smokers' Quitline. One Five Boroughs resident knows this very well, as Shirley G. gained freedom from nicotine in early November.

Shirley (*pictured*), a 58-year old Bronx resident and executive assistant in Midtown, smoked periodically since her early teenage years. Twenty years ago, she quit "cold turkey" and maintained a smoke-free life for 10 years. However, after the passing of her parents, Shirley picked up a cigarette and got hooked again.

During a family trip to Greece this past fall, Shirley said smoking was allowed “practically everywhere” and she “smoked a ton.” Upon coming home, she realized she finally had enough of smoking and did an online search for support. It was then that Shirley learned about free nicotine replacement therapy and coaching support from the New York State Smokers’ Quitline.

“The Quitline was instrumental in my success,” Shirley said. “Besides the nicotine patch helping to curb my cravings, the materials I received helped me to stay on track and remind me how I’d feel better and better with each passing week. I also learned about the HelpMeQuit app from the New York City Department of Health, which tracked how many days I remained smoke-free and how much money I saved. Most important, I got a follow-up call from one of the Quitline’s Quit Coaches a few weeks after I started using the patch. That was an unexpected bonus. Someone out there cared if I was still doing well. I think positive reinforcement is such a boost for anyone during the quit-process.”

Earlier in 2018, Shirley began a weight-loss program and achieved success. In her opinion, quitting smoking is a natural second step for taking better care of her health. During this time of year, Shirley also particularly loves not having to go outside in the rain or snow for a cigarette break. Last but not least, Shirley has five young grandsons and is happy they won’t grow to know her as a smoker.

“For me, just touching a cigarette is a trigger,” she said. “So I tell myself, ‘If I don’t touch a cigarette, I can’t smoke it.’ I also remind myself there is nothing happening in my life where a cigarette will make things better. Having a cigarette won’t improve the situation. For those who struggle with quitting, a doctor once told me to at least start with one less cigarette a day and take it gradually from there. Remember that there are great resources through the Smokers’ Quitline – and they’re free.”

The New York State Smokers’ Quitline is available as a resource for all New Yorkers seeking help to quit smoking. Quit Coaches can provide personalized coaching support and check eligibility for a starter kit of nicotine replacement therapy. In addition, the New York State Smokers’ Quitline recommends smokers talk to their healthcare providers about quitting and ask for a prescription for stop-smoking medications – most of which are covered by health insurance plans.

“Smoking continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in the world, but many free resources are available in New York State to help smokers quit,” said David Davis,

project manager for NYC Treats Tobacco, a program funded by the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Tobacco Control based at NYU Langone Health. "By combining coaching and medication, the odds for quitting successfully increase threefold. Healthcare providers play a major role in getting the process started, between prescribing the right medications and making referrals to the New York State Smokers' Quitline for extra support. Health plans, especially Medicaid, often cover extra nicotine replacement therapy and local cessation classes. Quitting smoking is the best thing you can do for your health, so use all the benefits available to make it happen."

This New Year and any year, smokers should call the New York State Smokers' Quitline at **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) anytime the journey gets tough for achieving or maintaining a smoke-free life. Quit Coaches are available seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m., and additional resources are available online at www.nysmokefree.com.

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. It is one of the first and busiest state quitlines in the nation, and has responded to more than 2.5 million calls since its inception in 1999. The Quitline encourages tobacco users to talk with their healthcare providers 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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