



***NOTE TO MEDIA:** Additional "Success Stories" and corresponding photos for different regions of New York State are available to read or download at the New York State Smokers' Quitline's Online News Room: <https://nysmokefree.com/newsroom>. Please reach out to us any time for interviews to enhance your coverage of New Year's resolutions and wellness stories. Tobacco cessation experts are available locally and online; clients may be available upon request.*

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MOHAWK VALLEY RESIDENT ACHIEVES FREEDOM FROM SMOKING WITH SUPPORT FROM THE NYS SMOKERS' QUITLINE

Rocky H. from Utica overcame nearly 30 years of cigarette smoking



UTICA, N.Y. – Jan. 6, 2023 – Quitting smoking or vaping is challenging; however, people across New York State achieve lasting success every day with proper support. The **New York State Smokers' Quitline** (Quitline) celebrates those who pursue and maintain tobacco-free living and encourages those who smoke or vape to make a quit-attempt in 2023 – whether it's a first time or trying again. The Quitline reminds all New York State residents personalized support from trained tobacco treatment specialists and free resources are available seven days a week by calling 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487), texting QUITNOW to

333888 and visiting nysmokefree.com.

As a child, Rocky H. (*pictured*) of Utica, N.Y. pleaded with her parents to stop smoking. Rocky never expected to follow in their footsteps but succumbed to peer influence in college. Just after her 39th birthday, Rocky lost her mother to lung cancer. Even after witnessing her mother's suffering, Rocky continued to smoke cigarettes.

“It took me almost eight years to finally feel truly ready to become tobacco-free,” Rocky said. “I hated cigarettes and what they were doing to my body. I had tried multiple times in the past to quit but was simply addicted.”

Rocky reached out to the New York State Smokers’ Quitline in 2008 and 2010 but was unable to sustain efforts to remain tobacco-free. She connected with the Quitline again in January 2022 via *nysmokefree.com*, this time with a different mindset.

“I told everyone I knew I was quitting and removed all smoking paraphernalia from my house,” Rocky said. “I received a support package from the Quitline on the exact date I picked to start my journey. Even with all the help I received, it still felt very hard to quit at first. I rearranged my furniture, washed everything I could find that smelled smoky, colored pictures to keep my hands busy and had plenty of popsicles instead of cigarettes.”

Rocky had received free nicotine patches in the past from the Quitline. This time, she additionally received nicotine gum. This proven stop-smoking medication, combined with support from the Quitline’s trained tobacco treatment specialists, gave Rocky the extra edge to succeed.

“Their follow-up calls to check in with me felt like they were timed so well,” she said. “They were right there when I began to have doubts and cravings. Real people; real concern; real help and support.”

Now, at age 47, Rocky is about to celebrate one year of being tobacco-free. She continues to notice a range of health benefits, such as the absence of postnasal drip and acid reflux, smoother skin, stronger taste buds, increased energy and easier breathing. Rocky occasionally still experiences cravings, but the multitude of positive changes in her life instill her desire to never smoke again. She hopes her story of ultimate success after continued struggles will inspire others to become tobacco-free.

“If I can quit after nearly 30 years, anyone can do it,” Rocky said. “You will surprise yourself by having the strength to do this and stick with it.”

Most New York State adults are eligible to receive a free starter supply of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) medications via mail, typically in the form of nicotine patches and often with supplemental nicotine gum or nicotine lozenges. When used appropriately and in combination, NRT medications can double or triple the odds of becoming and staying tobacco-free.

For those who prefer support via text, the Quitline reminds all New York State residents to try the new Learn2QuitNY six-week comprehensive program by enrolling at nysmokefree.com or texting QUITNOW to 333888. The Quitline also recommends all tobacco and vape product users to visit the CDC's "[Resolve to Be Smokefree in '23](https://www.cdc.gov/quitline/2023)" website, complete with tips, resources, links and app recommendations.

The Quitline wishes everyone a happy, healthy and tobacco-free 2023.

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 tobacco and vape product users to talk with their healthcare professionals and access available Medicaid or health insurance benefits for medication support. All New York State residents can call **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) or text QUITNOW to 333888 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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