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- *Michelle R. quit smoking with support from the New York State Smokers' Quitline*
- *Coaching, medication and son's encouragement helped Michelle R. finally quit for good*
- *After four months of being smoke-free, the benefits are dramatic and palpable*

SON'S 'HEART-TO-HEART' TALK HELPS MOM DECIDE TO QUIT SMOKING FOR GOOD

Central New York resident Michelle R. 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 during the holiday season: 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 Central New Yorker knows this very well, as Michelle R. of Syracuse gained freedom from nicotine this past August.

Michelle (*pictured with her son*), now 45, said she began smoking at age 18 because her parents smoked. Unlike many smokers, Michelle was fortunate to be able to quit on her first attempt during the summer. Support and medication from the New York State Smokers' Quitline played a major role in her success, and a heart-to-heart conversation with her son was the final impetus to become smoke-free.



"My son is getting married in October of 2020 and told me he wants to be a father soon after. He said, 'Mom, I want you to be there for my kids to have a grandmother.' I want to be around, too," said Michelle. "Besides the New York State Smokers' Quitline, my son was my No. 1 supporter. He lives in St. Louis but called me every day to check in during the beginning of my quit-process. He reminded me to overcome my three triggers for smoking: driving in the car, talking on the phone and having my morning cup of coffee."

In addition to receiving free nicotine replacement therapy from the New York State Smokers' Quitline, Michelle worked with the Quitline's Quit Coaches to develop a personalized plan. "They were compassionate, respectful and genuinely wanted to get to know me and my lifestyle," she said. "Every smoker who's trying to quit needs a friend for support along the way. I think the Quitline offers an extra place for someone to confide in."

Michelle is amazed at her vastly improved sense of smell and taste. Her high cholesterol numbers have come down, she no longer wheezes at night and she no longer wakes up coughing. With the newfound ability to breathe deeply, Michelle now turns to increased exercise and dog-walking to replace the time she would have "wasted" smoking cigarettes.

The New York State Smokers' Quitline is available as a free 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 Chris Owens, director for the Central New York Regional Center for Tobacco Health Systems, based at St. Joseph's Health in Syracuse. "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 added 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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