



## **Smoking cessation via WV Quitline counseling (plus nicotine replacement) is cost effective option**

The leading cause of preventable death and disease in West Virginia continues to be tobacco use with high prevalence for both smoking and spit tobacco. One in five deaths (almost 4,000 annually) in WV adults (age 35 and older) is caused by cigarette smoking.

The smoking-related economic impact in West Virginians totals \$1.8 billion annually. These costs include: 1) direct healthcare costs related to cigarette smoking, and 2) productivity losses due to smoking-related deaths. The estimated annual direct health care costs are \$709 million, and the estimated annual lost productivity (lost wages and other economic contributions) amounts to \$1.07 billion.

If viewed as a health cost per pack of cigarettes, this equals about \$9 per pack of cigarettes sold in West Virginia. When expressed per smoker, the cost is about \$4,600 per adult smoker (18 and older) in WV. (Data quoted above from *Tobacco Use is Costing and Killing Us in WV, 2012*)

The WV Tobacco Quitline has been in operation since July 2000, and since that time has enrolled over 75,000 West Virginians for services. West Virginia's Tobacco Cessation Quitline provides near universal coverage and partners with other state agencies and insurers to make marketing and referrals for all West Virginians much easier.

The Quitline provides highly trained, WV-based, certified phone coaches to help participants quit tobacco. Services are currently provided free for all West Virginians. (Medicaid-covered clients have a separate program). In addition to individual phone coaching, the program offers free nicotine replacement therapy and information and materials on quitting tobacco. Specialized programs for pregnant smokers and spit tobacco users are also available.

In 2011, almost 9,500 West Virginia residents enrolled for Quitline services. Thirty-four percent of those who enroll in Quitline services and complete the 4 session program remain successfully quit after 12 months post receiving services. The 4 session series costs \$250 per participant, which includes the cost of OTC Nicotine Replacement Therapy when needed. Ninety-four percent of those who used the Quitline are satisfied with services received.

For the Quitline services covered by the WV Bureau for Public Health's Division of Tobacco Prevention there is a significant return on investment. A 2009-2010 analysis demonstrated an average ROI of 896%, including both direct and indirect smoking costs totaling \$10.59 million. For every \$1 invested in the program, there was an average cost savings of \$8.96.

For more information of the West Virginia Tobacco Cessation Quitline, see:  
[http://www.bebetter.net/wvquitline\\_home.html](http://www.bebetter.net/wvquitline_home.html)