

# DHH pilot program offers expanded tobacco cessation support for state employees



Louisiana state employees who want to quit smoking or using tobacco now have a greater likelihood of success, thanks to a Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) pilot program that offers free expanded cessation coaching through the Louisiana Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW). The pilot program is made possible through a federal grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Smokers who are ready to quit are encouraged to enroll in free telephone coaching through the Louisiana Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW) or [www.QuitWithUsLA.org](http://www.QuitWithUsLA.org), which is jointly managed by the Louisiana Tobacco Control Program (administered by DHH) and the non-profit Louisiana Campaign for Tobacco-Free Living. Program participants receive free coaching and support through certified quit coaches who work with each caller to develop a personalized quit plan.

Through the DHH pilot program, state employees qualify for up to five scheduled coaching sessions as well as web-based services through the Quitline's web coach program. The pilot program is made possible through a federal grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Quitline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to all Louisiana residents over age 13, but the number of coaching sessions offered may be limited and is based on certain qualifications, such as pregnancy or the type of insurance coverage.

"According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 70 percent of current smokers report that they want to quit, but only about four to seven percent will be successful if their quit attempt is unaided," said Tiffany Netters, interim director of the DHH Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Unit. "By using a combination of behavioral therapy like Quitline coaching along with cessation medications, someone trying to quit can more than double the chances of success."



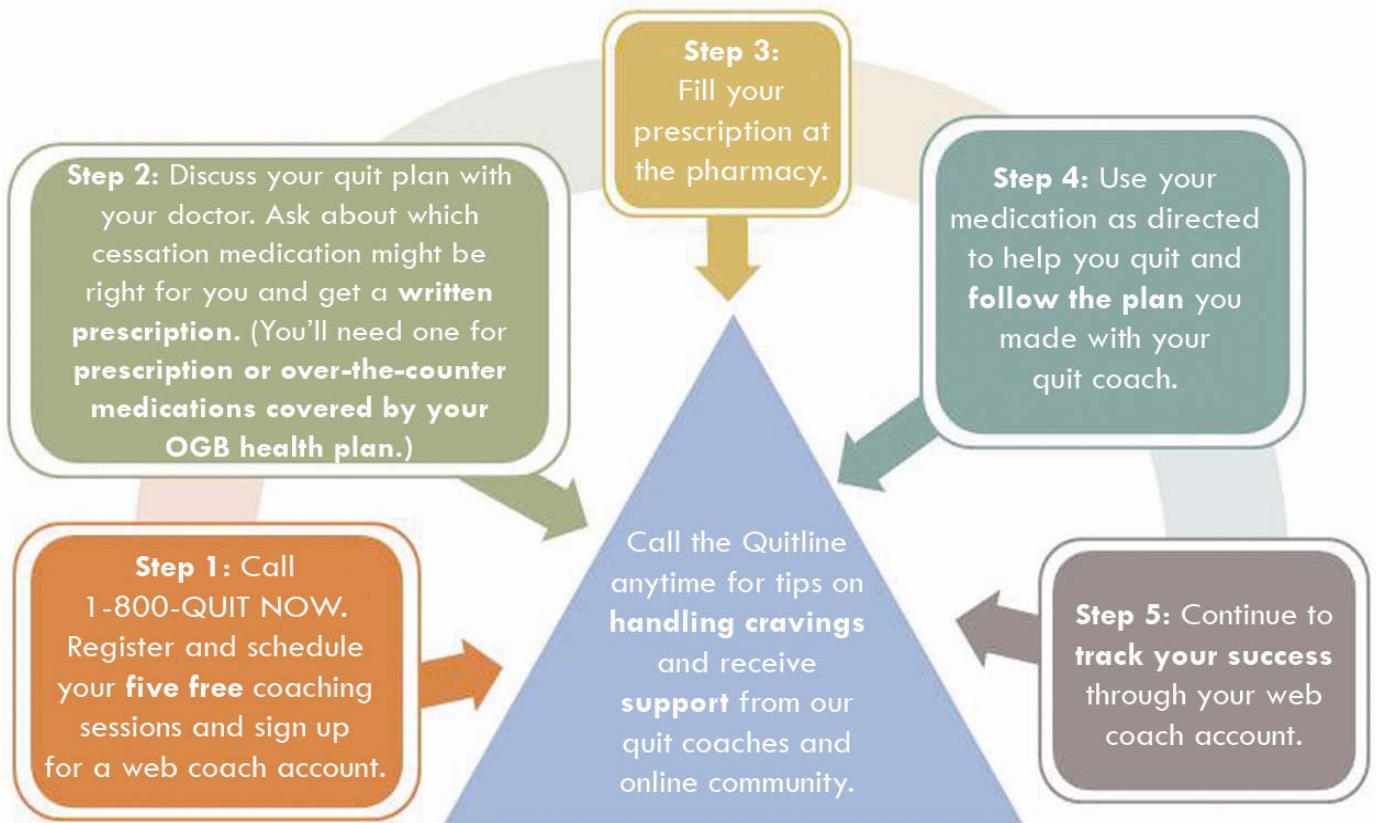
Most state employees with health coverage through the Office of Group Benefits are eligible to receive tobacco cessation medications with no co-payments through their prescription drug benefit. The medications included in the benefit are nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) drugs, which come in the form of gum, patches, inhalers, nasal spray and lozenges, as well as the prescription medications Bupropion (Zyban or Wellbutrin) and Varenicline (Chantix). These U.S. Food and Drug Administration

(FDA)-approved medications are known to decrease the urge to smoke or use tobacco and can double a tobacco user's chances of quitting successfully.

OGB health plan coverage for each of the seven FDA-approved cessation medications requires a written prescription, even for those sold over the counter.

The first step for a state employee planning to quit should be to call the Louisiana Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW) to get registered for coaching support during the quitting process. The quit coach works with the participant to develop an individualized quit plan. If a participant is interested in receiving prescription or over-the-counter cessation medications using OGB health plan benefits, the quit coach can guide him or her through the process of visiting a network physician, who will determine which cessation aid is medically appropriate for that individual. An OGB member seeking medication to quit using tobacco can then discuss his or her quit plan with the health care provider and obtain a prescription for the cessation medication.

## Five Steps to Achieving Success



### Louisiana Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW)

Join us online at [www.QuitWithUsLA.org](http://www.QuitWithUsLA.org) • [Facebook.com/QuitWithUsLA](https://www.facebook.com/QuitWithUsLA) • Twitter [@QuitWithUsLA](https://twitter.com/QuitWithUsLA)

Check with your health plan to determine your plan's coverage for tobacco cessation medications. For more information about tobacco cessation and the Louisiana Tobacco Quitline, visit [www.QuitWithUsLA.org](http://www.QuitWithUsLA.org).