



Public Health Mōno-Gram



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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH CELEBRATES 15th ANNIVERSARY OF THE CALIFORNIA SMOKERS' HELPLINE

Updated Helpline Technology Makes it Easier for Californians to Quit

SACRAMENTO, August 23, 2007 – Dr. Mark Horton, director of the California Department of Public Health, today celebrated the fifteen-year anniversary of the California Smokers' Helpline and debuted new Helpline features that will make it easier for California smokers to quit.

The Helpline services introduced today include an enhanced Web site with a click-to-call feature that allows users to click on an icon to speak with a trained counselor, text messaging options, and mobile billboards targeting areas with high percentages of smokers. These communication outreach techniques reflect the changing ways that Californians receive information.

"We have come a long way in reducing the number of smokers in California, but there is more work to do," Horton said. "We are providing these new information channels to enable all smokers in California to take charge of their health and become tobacco-free. The Helpline is a proven service that doubles the chance of quitting successfully."

Launched in 1992, the California Smokers' Helpline was the nation's first statewide telephone counseling service. Since its debut, the Helpline has provided free and confidential statewide telephone counseling services to nearly 430,000 Californians from diverse communities throughout the state. Quitting assistance is offered in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Korean as well as TDD for the hard of hearing.



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“Smoking remains the number one cause of preventable death and disease,” Horton said. “The California Smokers’ Helpline is a valuable resource that can help the state’s nearly 4 million smokers become tobacco-free.”

Research has shown that smokers who receive telephone counseling are more likely to make a serious attempt to quit than those who rely on self-help materials. The success rate for callers who receive multiple counseling sessions is double that of those who try to quit on their own.

Currently, there are an estimated 4 million smokers in California, approximately 3.6 million adults and 200,000 smokers younger than 18. California has the lowest smoking consumption per capita in the country. Adult per capita cigarette consumption has decreased in California by almost 60 percent, from 113 packs per person in 1988 to 43 packs per person in 2006.

Further information about the California Smokers’ Helpline is available at <http://www.NoButts.org> or 1-800-NO-BUTTS.

