



## Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line Advertising Background Information

### AUDIENCE

There are approximately 800,000 adult smokers in Wisconsin. About 70 percent want to quit and 20 percent or 160,000 are ready to make a quit attempt at a particular time.

Smokers today can be characterized primarily as:

- Lower income
- Less education
- More likely to be disadvantaged
- Both rural and urban

Those making serious quit attempts are usually at least 35 years old, have made attempts in the past, need help beyond cold turkey. Quitting “cold turkey” is successful about 5 percent of the time. Quitting with medication and counseling is usually over 20 percent. Quitting through the Quit Line is about 22 percent.

Most smokers do not understand how to quit and feel ashamed because of past failures. Many also live with smokers or have friends who are smokers.

### CONTENT

It is important from the start to clarify what is cessation advertising and what is quit line advertising. They are not the same. They have different purposes and content.

**Cessation advertising** can have a number of themes and messages—everything from physical damage from smoking to the effect of smoking on friends and family. The target can be smokers who are ready to quit, or not ready to quit, friends, family and others. The goal may be awareness, understanding or action.

**Quit line advertising** is usually much more specific. It primarily targets smokers who are ready to quit and is designed to get them to call a quit line. The content and tone are different from most cessation ads. Quit line advertising is action-oriented and has results that are easily measurable. Quit line advertising is generally supportive and non-judgemental and provides smokers with a positive feeling that help is available.

**More about quit line advertising.** Best practices from other states, research done in Oregon and Arizona and our own experience have demonstrated that quit line advertising should be concerned with “how to quit,” not “why to quit.” Quit Line advertising is most effective when it is supportive and empowering. It must make people feel that they can be in control of their smoking. We have several research documents that support this. The best ads according to current research are “Quitting Takes Practice” and the Chuck campaign.

### TIMING

**Timing of Quit Line advertising.** There is a seasonality to quitting smoking so Quit Line advertising should be timed to take advantage of this seasonality. Quit attempt seasonality runs like this:

January through June—high number of interested quitters, high number of quit attempts.

Summer is traditionally a poor time to run cessation advertising.

September sees a renewed interest in quitting which peaks around the Smoke-Out in November.

End of November through the holidays are again poor times for Quit Line advertising.

## **MEDIA**

**Media.** The best medium for attracting smokers is television, directed at lower SES individuals. The Quit Line's best success to date has been with FOX television, primarily daytime and late night. This has been the most successful and the most cost effective. Daytime television and late night television on the other networks has been successful depending upon the market. FOX has been very successful at generating calls in the Milwaukee market.

Radio has been used in other states effectively but has shown little success thus far in Wisconsin. Radio has been shown in other states to drive more males to quit lines if properly targeted.

Our experience with advertising for study participants has shown little success with billboards and bus signs. We have had some success with print but it has not been cost-effective.

**Measurement.** We receive reports each week on the number of calls and how callers heard about the quit line. We also receive monthly summaries by county. This provides data for immediate evaluation of the content and/or weight of the campaign.

### **Public Relations and other methods**

We have supported the Quit Line with a very strong public relations campaign. Since the beginning, we have used news releases and events to promote the Quit Line. Working with the coalitions and our outreach staff, we distributed news releases to every corner of the state and have thousands of clippings. We also have a strong physician referral program and our Fax to Quit program is generating more calls each week—sometimes as much as half the call volume.