

More than 100,000 Americans quit smoking due to national media campaign

September 9 2013

An estimated 1.6 million smokers attempted to quit smoking because of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "Tips From Former Smokers" national ad campaign, according to a study released by the CDC. As a result of the 2012 campaign, more than 200,000 Americans had quit smoking immediately following the three-month campaign, of which researchers estimated that more than 100,000 will likely quit smoking permanently. These results exceed the campaign's original goals of 500,000 quit attempts and 50,000 successful quits.

The study surveyed thousands of adult [smokers](#) and nonsmokers before and after the campaign. Findings showed that, by quitting, former smokers added a total of about a third of a million years of life to the U.S. population. The Tips campaign, which aired from March 19 to June 10, 2012, was the first time a federal agency had developed and placed paid advertisements for a national tobacco education campaign. Ads featured emotionally powerful stories of former smokers living with smoking-related diseases and disabilities. The campaign encouraged people to call 1-800-QUIT-NOW, a toll-free number to access quit support across the country, or visit a quit-assistance website. The study on the campaign's impact is published today by a [medical journal](#), *The Lancet*.

"This is exciting news. Quitting can be hard, and I congratulate and celebrate with former smokers - this is the most important step you can take to a longer, healthier life," said CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. "I encourage anyone who tried to quit to keep trying – it may

take several attempts to succeed."

The study found that millions of nonsmokers reported talking to friends and family about the dangers of smoking and referring smokers to quit services. Almost 80 percent of smokers and almost 75 percent of non-smokers recalled seeing at least one of the ads during the three-month campaign.

Calls to the [quitline](#) more than doubled during the campaign and visits to the website were more than five times higher than for the same 12-week period in 2011, according to a 2012 report.

"Hard-hitting campaigns like "Tips From Former Smokers" are great investments in public health," said McAfee, M.D., M.P.H., director of the CDC Office on Smoking and Health, and lead author of the study. This study shows that we save a year of life for less than \$200. That makes it one of the most cost-effective prevention efforts.

The Tips campaign is an important counter to the more than \$8 billion the tobacco industry spends annually to make cigarettes more attractive and more available, including to youth and young adults. Investments in educational campaigns such as TIPS can help to save more lives and reduce health care costs. The Affordable Care Act's Prevention and Public Health Fund paid for the \$54 million Tips 2012 campaign. A second set of Tips ads aired earlier this year and plans are under way for a new set of Tips ads in 2014. CDC will release initial results of the 2013 ads later this year.

This coming January 2014 will mark the 50th anniversary of the first Surgeon General's report on smoking and health, which concluded that smoking cigarettes causes lung cancer. Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States, killing more than 1,200 Americans every day. More than 8 million Americans live

with a smoking-related disease. Each day, over 1,000 youth under 18 become daily smokers. Smoking-related diseases cost Americans \$96 billion a year in direct health care expenses and \$97 billion in lost productivity each year, a substantial portion of which come in taxpayer-supported payments.

Provided by GolinHarris DC

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