

# Latest research delineates the effectiveness of 'quitlines' for smoking cessation

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While cigarette smoking continues to be the leading cause of preventable disease, disability and death in the U.S., the evidence base for cessation support has revealed that telephone call centers, or 'quitlines,' have been

a particularly successful intervention, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which recently published a compilation of scientific research in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

Titled "The Role of Quitlines in Tobacco Cessation," the supplement is composed of nine peer-reviewed articles and three commentaries presenting the latest science on quitlines' effectiveness for smoking termination. The compilation demonstrates the relevance and importance of call centers as an essential population-level tool designed to increase successful smoking suspension outcomes, and their role as part of a comprehensive approach to tobacco control. Furthermore, it points to shifts in the commercial tobacco product landscape that will require the ongoing improvement and innovation in quitlines' technology to continue to effectively support smokers who want to quit to successfully cease.

According to the CDC, nearly 500,000 U.S. adults die prematurely of smoking tobacco or exposure to [second-hand smoke](#), while over 16 million live with a serious illness caused by smoking each year. Additionally, smoking-related disease among adults costs the U.S. over \$300 billion annually, including \$170 billion in direct medical care and \$150 billion in lost productivity due to premature death.

While cigarette smoking has significantly decreased among U.S. adults since the 1960s, 14 percent were still smokers in 2019, and its prevalence remains high among individuals who are less educated, low-income, LGBT, of a certain race and ethnicity, and people with behavioral health concerns.

"The supplement presents the latest evidence on quitlines from leading [tobacco control](#) and prevention researchers and practitioners," said Guest Co-editor Emily F. Gates, an assistant professor of Measurement, Evaluation, Statistics & Assessment at Boston College's Lynch School of

Education and Human Development. "It showcases the efforts to customize services to reduce health disparities, recognizes the diverse tobacco product environment, and outlines ways to expand quitlines' reach through technological innovation, such as mobile apps and text messaging. Although compiled prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it nonetheless reinforces the urgency and value of quitting [tobacco](#), and the benefits of quitlines in facilitating the achievement of that critically important goal."

CDC Researcher Rebecca Glover-Kudon served as co-editor in coordination with a CDC working group and lead editors of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

**More information:** Rebecca M. Glover-Kudon et al, The Role of Quitlines in Tobacco Cessation: An Introduction, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/j.amepre.2020.12.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2020.12.003)

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