

Florida Department of Health Quit-for-Life Line

Report Prepared for the Florida Tobacco Prevention Program, Strategic Planning Meeting, April 4, 2005

Who Calls the Florida Quitline?

The Florida Quit-for-Life Line (Quitline) began operations in December 2001, conducted by the American Cancer Society (ACS) Call Center in Austin, Texas. The Florida Quitline provides telephone counseling to residents of Florida who want to stop using tobacco products. Its goals include reduced consumption of tobacco products among Quitline callers, sustained abstinence and reduction in exposure to second-hand smoke. Quitline services include counseling, referrals and informational materials on quitting smoking.

In its three and a half years of activity, the Quitline has received over 8,560 calls from Floridians. Figure 1 shows the monthly totals of calls since December 2001. The high monthly calls in the first year of Quitline activity are related to a smoking cessation media campaign conducted by the Department of Health in the Orlando area.

Floridians who call the Quitline are varied across all age groups. More of the callers are women (57.3%) than men (29.6%), as shown in Figure 2. The majority of Quitline callers are between 45 and 64 (34.3%), followed by those aged 30 to 44 (29.1%). Very few minors under 18 called the Quitline. Among women callers in this period, 177 were pregnant. Almost a quarter of the callers had children under 18 in the household (24.3%). Another quarter of callers live with a partner who smokes (24.3%). Four out of five callers requested counseling to quit smoking (44.0%), and one out of five requested self-help materials (18.5%).

Calls to the Quitline come from across the state, with most calls from the North Central region, which includes Orlando and the Space Coast. Figure 3 compares calls by ethnicity and region, and shows clearly that the majority of calls come from White Floridians (52.1%), followed by Hispanics (7.0%) and African Americans (5.6%).

From the Quitline's inception, the DOH has tried to publicize its existence to Florida's citizens, often with little budget. Since 2003 the DOH has sent out over 4,000 Quitline promotional packets to local and state agencies, county health departments, doctors, dentist, health plans, insurance companies, private companies, colleges, universities, schools, churches and community centers. These promotional packets are helping to spread the awareness of the Quitline into the communities.

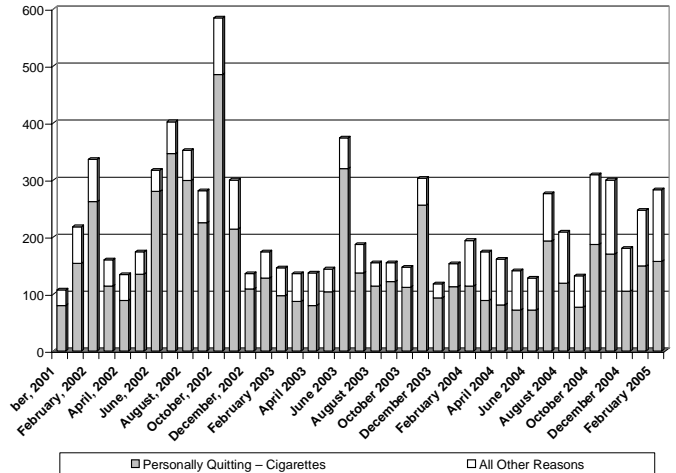


Figure 1. Number of Calls to the Florida Quitline By Reason for Call, December 2001 to February 2005

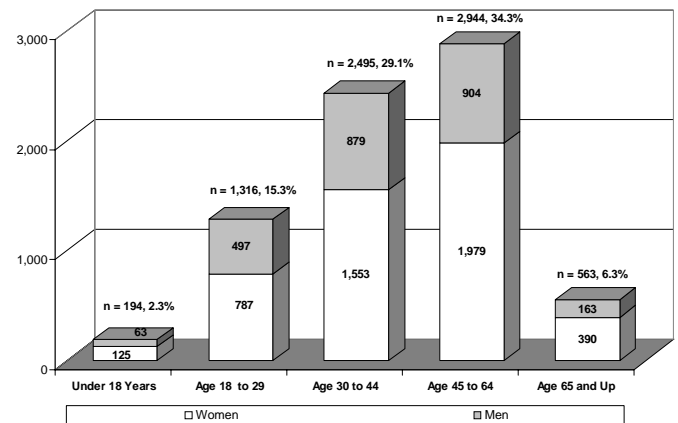


Figure 2. Comparison of the Gender and Age Groups of Callers to the Florida Quitline, December 2001 to February 2005

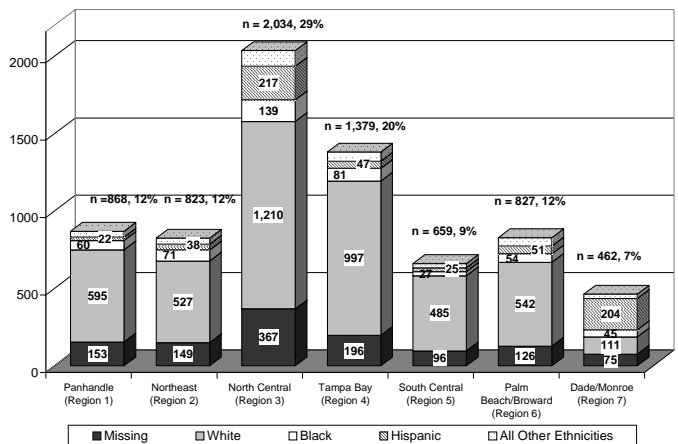


Figure 3. Comparison of Florida Quitline Call Volume By Ethnicity and by Florida Region, December 2001 to February 2005

Smoking Cessation Outcomes Following a Call to the Florida Quitline

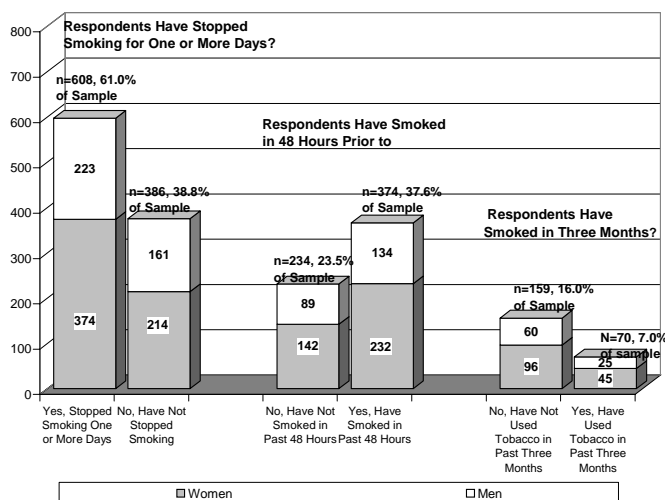


Figure 4. Comparison of Smoking Cessation Attempts and Success in Quitting Smoking at 3-Month Evaluation, by Gender, for Calls from December 2001 to February 2003

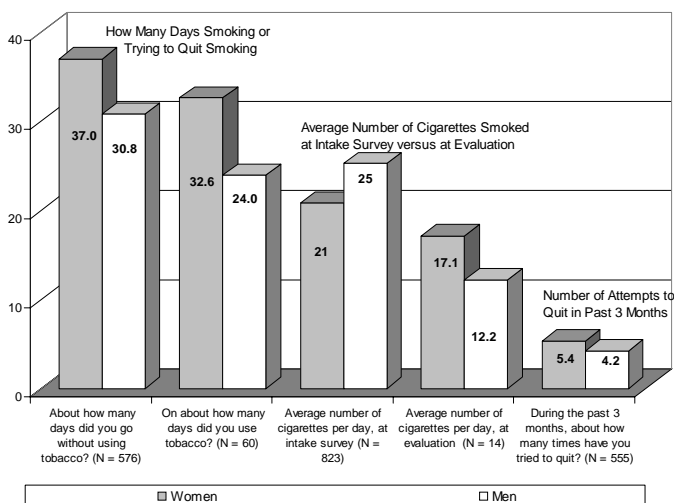


Figure 5. Comparison of Smoking-Cessation and Quitting Attempts at 3-Month Evaluation, Calls from December 2001 to February 2003

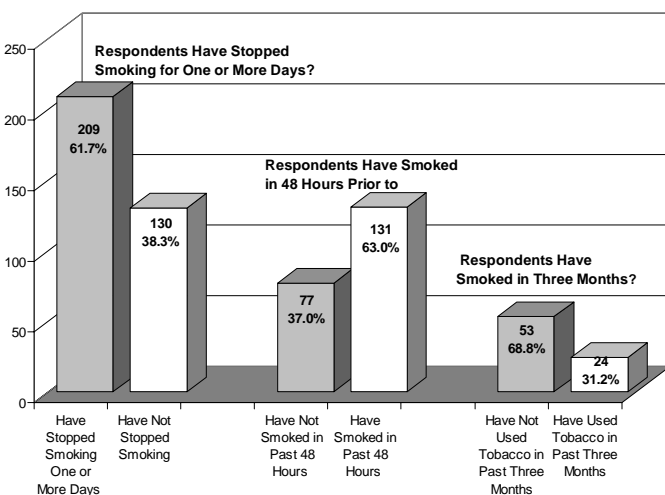


Figure 6. Comparison of Smoking-Cessation and Quit Attempts at 3-Month Evaluation by Smokers with Children Under 18 in the Household

When a Florida resident calls the Quitline he or she receives counseling, referrals to services, coupons for nicotine replacements or self-help materials. The caller is also called back after three months to evaluate whether he or she was able to quit smoking. The analysis presented in Figures 4 and 5 looks at the success of smoking cessation at three months after the Quitline call. The data come from the first year of Florida Quitline activity, representing callers from December 2001 to February 2003.

ACS staff completed evaluations for 588 women (59.0% of evaluations) and 384 men (38.6% of evaluations). When asked if they had stopped smoking for one or more days in the past three months, 63.6% of women and 58.1% of men replied in the positive, as shown in Figure 4. The percentage of women and men who quit smoking entirely was also relatively equal, with 16.3% of women, and 15.6% of men quitting smoking. For the entire sample population, the quit rate for Quitline calls after three months was 16.0%.

Sixty-one percent of Quitline clients reported reducing their tobacco consumption after three months, as shown in Figure 5. Comparing between the average number of days the respondent went without smoking, women went for about a week longer (37 days) than the men (30.8 days), though both quit smoking for about a month during this three month period.

Comparing the average number of cigarettes smoked at the time of the original Quitline call versus the average number smoked at the time of the evaluation, women reduced their consumption from 21 cigarettes per day to 17.1 cigarettes. Men dropped from an average of 25 cigarettes per day to 12.2 cigarettes, a reduction of 50%.

In the 3-month follow-up evaluation, ACS staff contacted 339 households with children under 18, a population that equals 36.2% of the evaluation sample. In these households 61.7% of the adults stopped smoking for one or more days in the three months after their call to the Quitline. Of these, 77 had not smoked in the past 48 hours before the evaluation call. When asked if they had smoked at all, 53 (15.6% of households with children under 18) answered that they had quit entirely.

The Florida Quitline is evaluated by an independent vendor, Image Research, which submits a cumulative report of calls to DOH every month, a comprehensive evaluation at the end of the fiscal year and county-specific Quitline reports to county health departments, upon request. If you would like to receive a Quitline report, please send your name to: christopher@imageresearch.com. You can find the 2003 and 2004 Quitline Evaluations at: www.imageresearch.com.