



Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

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Contact: Christina Dettman
(502) 229-2791

Jordan Rowe
(502) 352-3977

Free Service will help Kentucky teens stop vaping, smoking

FRANKFORT, Ky. (November 18, 2019) - The Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) is launching a free service aimed at helping teens quit vaping, smoking, and using other tobacco products. The service is called My Life, My Quit and will go live across the state on Tuesday, Nov. 12.

Teenagers who want to stop using e-cigarettes or other tobacco products can text or call the toll-free My Life, My Quit number: 1-855-891-9989. They will then be connected to a “quit coach” who will provide, free, confidential, real-time support. Each teen can get five sessions of personalized support through live texting, phone, or online chat.

The goal of the My Life, My Quit coaching sessions is for the teen to build a plan to quit tobacco. The quit coach will help them develop strategies to cope with stress, address symptoms of withdrawal, and navigate social situations.

“We know how difficult it is for young people to find effective help quitting tobacco products, especially help that is tailored just for them,” said the Kentucky Department for Public Health’s Elizabeth Anderson-Hoagland. “But we also know that with help and support, young people can successfully quit tobacco, including vaping.”

Quitting vaping can be challenging because almost all e-cigarettes contain nicotine, the same addictive chemical found in cigarettes and other tobacco products. One JUUL pod contains as much nicotine as an entire pack of cigarettes. The U.S. Surgeon General says nicotine exposure is particularly dangerous in adolescents because it can “prime the brain for addiction to other drugs such as cocaine.”

My Life, My Quit is operated by National Jewish Health, which also operates Quit Now Kentucky and the toll-free number 1-800-QUIT-NOW which helps Kentuckians quit using tobacco. 1-800-QUIT-NOW is available to all ages, but the creators of My Life, My Quit say teens told them traditional quit lines geared toward adults did not resonate with them.

My Life, My Quit was designed with the input of young people, and employs quit coaches trained in cognitive and psycho-social development. My Life, My Quit was launched in July and Kentucky will be the thirteenth state to offer it.

“The teen quit experience is very different from the adult experience,” said Thomas Ylioja, PhD, clinical director of Health Initiatives at National Jewish Health. “This program allows us to meet teens where they are, communicate with them via channels they are comfortable with, and to support them through their quit journey.”

My Life, My Quit launches as the CDC and other public health officials work to address an outbreak of severe lung injury associated with vaping. More than 2,000 people across the country have experienced serious respiratory issues and other symptoms as a result of using e-cigarettes, though the exact cause of their injuries remains unknown. Many of those affected are young people, probably because they are more likely to vape than other age groups. High school students in Kentucky are more than twice as likely as adults to use e-cigarettes.

According to the 2018 Kentucky Incentives for Prevention Survey, nearly one in four of Kentucky’s tenth graders and 14 percent of eighth graders had used an e-cigarette in the last month. Last year, the U.S. Surgeon General and other public health officials began officially referring to youth e-cigarette use as ‘an epidemic.’ E-cigarette companies have been accused of marketing their products toward youth by using sweet flavors and sleek designs that can be hidden from adults easily.

“With youth vaping use on the rise, both here and across the U.S., we are very excited to bring My Life, My Quit to Kentucky and offer a program that is specifically tailored to

helping young people quit tobacco and vaping,” said Kentucky Department for Public Health Tobacco Cessation Administrator Heather Shaw.

For more information about My Life, My Quit, visit MyLifeMyQuit.com. Learn more about Quit Now Kentucky’s free services like 1-800-QUIT-NOW by visiting QuitNowKentucky.com.

Additional information is available at <http://chfs.ky.gov/>.

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