



For Immediate Release

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Dramatic Increase in QUITPLAN® Services After Tobacco Tax Hike

Use of free quit-smoking services jumps following \$1.60 increase on cigarettes

Minneapolis, July 24, 2013 – The recent tobacco tax increase has encouraged a lot of Minnesotans to think about quitting smoking. QUITPLAN Services, the free stop-smoking programs provided by ClearWay MinnesotaSM, has seen user volumes spike following the increase. The additional \$1.60 tax on cigarettes pushed the average price in Minnesota to approximately \$7.50 per pack.

Since the new tax took effect on July 1, many Minnesotans have turned to QUITPLAN Services for help. During the first two weeks of July 2013 (July 1 - July 14), QUITPLAN Services received 900 calls through the QUIPTLAN Helpline, an increase of 256 percent compared to the first two weeks in July 2012. In addition, the quitplan.com website had 5,650 web visits over the same timespan, an increase of 289 percent from 2012.

“Research from Minnesota and other states clearly shows that tobacco price increases are effective at helping smokers quit,” said David Willoughby, Chief Executive Officer of ClearWay Minnesota. “We’re happy that so many Minnesotans are accessing the free, professional help from QUITPLAN Services to quit smoking, save money and improve their health.”

New research released in the November 2012 supplement to the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* illustrates that the price of tobacco is the largest contributing factor to reducing smoking prevalence in Minnesota. This research, the Minnesota SimSmoke model, shows that tobacco price increases are the biggest single factor for reducing smoking rates, and was responsible for 43 percent of all smoking declines in the state since 1993. Smoke-free air laws, media campaigns, strong youth access laws and cessation treatment also contributed.

Since its launch by ClearWay Minnesota in 2001, QUITPLAN Services has helped more than 20,000 Minnesotans successfully quit tobacco. QUITPLAN Services offers all Minnesotans free access to quit-smoking counseling and can provide individuals with nicotine patches, gum or lozenges. Minnesotans can find out about all the free help to quit smoking available through QUITPLAN Services by calling 1-888-354-PLAN (7526) or by visiting www.quitplan.com.

About ClearWay MinnesotaSM

ClearWay Minnesota is an independent, non-profit organization that improves the health of Minnesotans by reducing the harm caused by tobacco. ClearWay Minnesota serves Minnesota through its grant-making program, QUITPLAN® stop-smoking services and statewide outreach activities. It is funded with 3 percent of the state's 1998 tobacco settlement. For more information on ClearWay Minnesota or QUITPLAN Services, call 952-767-1400 or visit clearwaymn.org.

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