



## **New U.S. Public Health Service Tobacco Guidelines Validate Effectiveness of Quitlines**

### ***Updated Guideline Promotes Combination of Counseling & Medication***

**SEATTLE, Wash., May 7, 2008** – The U.S. Public Health Service today released an update to the Clinical Practice Guideline *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence*. Updated Guideline findings include validation of the effectiveness of telephone counseling and quitlines, which have been expanding rapidly over the past three years. All 50 states now have centralized quitlines, and hundreds of large and small employers are providing more intensive telephone support with medications to their employees. These services have become so critical to public health, business, and clinical strategies to help smokers quit that a new industry is rapidly growing to facilitate high-quality, effective delivery of these services to as many people as possible. For example, Free & Clear Inc., the national leader in evidence-based tobacco cessation programs delivered via the phone and internet, provides quitline services to 17 states and over 200 employers and health plans and has grown from 50 employees to 400 as demand for telephone counseling has increased.

According to the key recommendations made by the Guideline, “Telephone quitline counseling is effective with diverse populations and has broad reach. Therefore, clinicians and healthcare delivery systems should both ensure patient access to quitlines and promote quitline use.” The Guideline also reinforced and extended previous findings that healthcare system changes such as providing coverage for cessation services, training clinicians in cessation techniques, and providing reminders to help will all increase smokers’ success quitting. An example of this in action is Washington State’s Tobacco Cessation Resource Center, operated by Free & Clear Inc., which develops and delivers training to help healthcare providers identify and successfully treat tobacco users.

“This updated PHS Guideline is a major milestone in the effort to tackle the number one preventable cause of death and disease in the U.S.,” said Tim McAfee, Free & Clear’s Chief Medical Officer, who attended the launch of the Guideline update at the Chicago American Medical Association headquarters. “Led by Dr. Michael Fiore at the Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention at the University of Wisconsin, a task force of respected national experts systematically reviewed and analyzed the results of 2,700 high-quality studies to draw their conclusions.”

“Up to this point, there was some controversy as to whether counseling improved people’s chances of quitting successfully if they were already using a cessation medication,” said Susan Zbikowski, Free & Clear’s Vice President of Clinical and Behavioral Sciences. “The Task Force, after reviewing the evidence, found that combining medication and counseling is the most effective strategy.”

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Free & Clear's "Quit For Life Program" has been the nation's leading tobacco cessation program for over 20 years. Free & Clear was an active contributor to the research base reviewed by the U.S. PHS Guideline, collaborating with academic centers to conduct several of the large randomized trials reviewed by the Task Force. These showed integrated counseling delivered over the phone combined with medication produces better results than medication alone. Using this approach, Free & Clear has helped more than 200,000 Americans successfully quit smoking since 2004, translating to over two million years of life added and \$1 billion in cost savings. The program features an integrated mix of medication support, phone-based cognitive behavioral-based coaching and web-based learning and social support.

**About Free & Clear, Inc.**

Free & Clear, Inc. is the nation's leading provider of tobacco treatment services for health plans, employers, and government organizations. Free & Clear helps its clients improve the health of their populations and control related costs by reducing the prevalence of tobacco use. More than 50 million people have access to the Free & Clear Quit For Life Program, which has had its proof of effectiveness published in multiple peer-reviewed, scientific journals over the course of over 20 years years. Free & Clear is based in Seattle, Washington. More information about Free & Clear can be found at [www.freeclear.com](http://www.freeclear.com).

**For More Information:**

Sharen Ross  
Free & Clear, Inc.  
(206) 876-2276  
[Sharen.Ross@freeclear.com](mailto:Sharen.Ross@freeclear.com)

Emily Killoren  
Edelman  
(206) 268-2267  
[Emily.Killoren@edelman.com](mailto:Emily.Killoren@edelman.com)

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