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# NEWS RELEASE

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## TOBACCO CESSATION EFFORTS TO TARGET NEW MOTHERS

*After Birth, New Mothers At Elevated Risk Of Resuming Smoking*

**ATLANTA** – The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Programs recently expanded their free specialized tobacco cessation counseling services in an effort to help postpartum women quit tobacco products.

In Georgia, approximately 600,000 women smoke cigarettes. Among women who quit smoking during pregnancy, postpartum relapse rates for tobacco use remain high. According to Georgia Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) data, approximately 8 percent or 11,000 pregnant women report that they smoked cigarettes during the last three months of their pregnancy. Evidence shows that more than 1/2 of pregnant women who quit smoking resume smoking within six months of giving birth.

More specifically, it is estimated that more than \$4.5 billion per year, in direct medical expenditures, can be attributed to parental smoking to care for smoking-related problems of newborns, infants and young children, as well as to treat pregnancy and birth complications. These estimates do not include the enormous costs associated with the physical, developmental, and behavioral problems of newborns, infants, and children related to smoke exposure over the years.

Parental or other household smoking following birth may further increase the chances that children will suffer from smoke-related coughs and wheezing, asthma, bronchitis, lower respiratory tract infections, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), eye and ear problems, as well as injury or death from cigarette-caused fires.

The Department is encouraging post partum mothers to quit tobacco with the assistance of free tobacco cessation counseling and web-based services which are administered through the Georgia Tobacco Quit Line (GTQL) to adults and teens 13 to 17. The expansion of the GTQL specialty counseling services is designed to increase awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco use and secondhand smoke, promote the benefits of cessation, and prevent relapse. Callers connect with professionals who develop an individualized plan customized to address tobacco cessation, withdrawal symptoms and relapse prevention. Callers receive free "Quit" kit and self-support materials. Referring healthcare professionals may also elect to receive customized patient/client progress or feedback reports.

The GTQL is operated by a national tobacco cessation service vendor under a contract with the Georgia Department of Public Health (GPH) through the Georgia Tobacco Use Prevention Program (GTUPP). The GTQL provides tobacco counseling services in accordance with current United States Public Health Services (PHS) Clinical Practices Guidelines for Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence. The Georgia Tobacco Quit Line (GTQL) numbers are: 1-877-270-STOP (7867) English; 1-877-2NO-FUME; (1-877-266-3863)-Spanish; and For Hearing Impaired (TTY services) 1-877-777-6534.

To learn more about adult smoking and the latest findings in the US, visit [http://www.cdc.gov/VitalSigns/AdultSmoking/?s\\_cid=vitalsigns-086-bb](http://www.cdc.gov/VitalSigns/AdultSmoking/?s_cid=vitalsigns-086-bb) and <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/SocialMedia.html#AdultSmoking>

### **About the Georgia Department of Public Health**

The Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) is the lead agency responsible for the health of Georgia's communities and the entire population. In 2011, the General Assembly restored DPH to its own state agency after more than 30 years consolidated under other departments. At the state level, DPH is divided into numerous divisions, sections, programs and offices, and at the local level, DPH functions via 18 health districts and 159 county health departments. Through the changes, the mission has remained constant – to protect the lives of all Georgians. Today, DPH's main functions include: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Maternal and Child Health, Infectious Disease and Immunization, Environmental Health, Epidemiology, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Emergency Medical Services, Pharmacy, Nursing, Volunteer Health Care, the Office of Health Equity, Vital Records and the State Public Health Laboratory. For more information on DPH, visit [www.health.state.ga.us](http://www.health.state.ga.us).