

TRICARE BENEFICIARY BULLETIN – NOVEMBER 18, 2010 – 630
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TRICARE Recognizes the Great American Smoke out

This is the TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin, an update on the latest news to help you make the best use of your TRICARE Benefit. I'm Lorraine Cwieka.

Today, TRICARE observes The Great American Smoke out.

In recognition of the Great American Smoke out, TRICARE encourages beneficiaries around the world who smoke to stop for 24 hours, hoping their decision to quit for one day will cause them to quit forever.

The Great American Smoke out, also known as GASO, is an annual event held on the third Thursday of November in the United States promoting local and nationwide activities that focus on the benefits of not smoking.

“Smoking Cessation is important to TRICARE because smokers are affected not only in their health by smoking, but also in their readiness to fight. There are many health affects

that people already know about. But there are also ones that a lot of people don't know about that affect their readiness.”

It is no secret that the number one risk factor for lung cancer is smoking tobacco products. More people die from lung cancer than any other type of cancer, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. According to the DOD 2008 Health Related Behaviors Survey, across all services, 24 percent of current smokers surveyed planned to quit in the following month, and 38 percent planned to quit in the following six months. Since 2002, when cigarette use was 34 percent there has been a slight, but non-significant decline in usage with 2008 usage at 31 percent.

Tobacco use has long been a concern of the U.S. military; TRICARE has several resources available to beneficiaries, including toll-free Smoking Quitlines. Toll-free phone numbers are available in each TRICARE region (North: 1-866-459-8766, South: 1-877-414-9949, West: 1-866-244-6870) offering support, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Beneficiaries who want to participate in GASO can also find support through DoD's tobacco cessation campaign website (www.ucanquit2.org). The award-winning website has all the tools and support needed to help service members and their families quit smoking. There is a special GASO section, featuring an online pledge for service members to publicly announce their intent to stop smoking for the day.

The website also features Train2Quit, a new online support system using interactive components such as quit tools, self-assessment questionnaires, quizzes and other activities. Beneficiaries can create a customizable quit plan with a calendar to track progress and learn how to beat cravings, overcome weight gain and cope with the effects of nicotine withdrawal. There's also a savings calculator that provides motivation by showing how much extra cash is saved over time if they quit smoking.

“One of the main ways we are getting the word out is through the website www.ucanquit2.org.” “We found that research shows that using an interactive online cessation program, shows that people are twice as likely to succeed in quitting tobacco. We offer a lot of tools and resources online through ucanquit2.org, so that folks will have the opportunity, anytime of the day and night, to go online and access: resources, quit tools and quit calendars. We have a training program, ‘Trained to Quit’ which is a support system that will help guide those who want to quit, through the quit process and provide tools and resources all along the way specifically garnered around their particular situation. We also have a special feature, live chat, where folks can go on and chat online with live tobacco cessation coaches who are expert in providing that type of partnership and support as folks go through the different stages of quitting.”

And that's today's TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin. We'll have more news that you can use next week!

