

For Immediate Release

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Eleven Percent of Washtenaw County Pregnant Women Smoke. Free Help is Available.

YPSILANTI, Mich., March 7, 2019 – Eleven percent of Washtenaw County women who gave birth in 2016 reported that they smoked cigarettes while pregnant, according to a [new report](#) from the Washtenaw County Health Department. The Health Department encourages pregnant women to take advantage of the Michigan Tobacco Quitline’s free help in quitting smoking and tobacco use.

“Although we’ve seen a significant decrease in the smoking rate for pregnant women – from a peak of 14 percent in 2013 to 11 percent in 2016 – we want that number to be as close to zero as possible,” says Amanda Ng, health educator at the Washtenaw County Health Department.

Smoking during pregnancy heightens the risk of complications during pregnancy and after birth. Babies born to women who smoked while pregnant have a higher risk of low birth weight, preterm birth, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and are more likely to show signs of distress and excitability. In Washtenaw County, the rate of babies who ended up in the NICU was double for mothers who smoked, compared to those who did not smoke during pregnancy, from 2014 to 2016.

“Nicotine is very addictive,” says Ng. “People who smoke, including pregnant women who smoke, are best able to quit when they get help and support. We want women and health care providers to know that there is free help available to make quitting easier.”

The [Michigan Tobacco Quitline](#) is an evidence-based service that provides free help with quitting smoking to all pregnant women, regardless of insurance status. The services available for pregnant women include: counseling sessions, incentives, and free nicotine replacement therapy with a prescription from a physician. Pregnant women can call the Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

While it is best to quit smoking before becoming pregnant, quitting smoking at any point during pregnancy is helpful in reducing health harms to the woman and fetus. Pregnant women are eligible for five counseling sessions during pregnancy and four counseling sessions during the postpartum period through the Quitline. They are assigned to counselors trained specifically to support pregnant women. Pregnant women receive a welcome packet after their first call, and a rewards card for each call completed during pregnancy and the postpartum period.

The Michigan Tobacco Quitline

The Michigan Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-800-784-8669) is an evidence-based service that helps smokers access quit aids, counseling and other resources. The service is available 24/7 in multiple languages.

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The Michigan Tobacco Quitline provides free telephone coaching for the uninsured, pregnant women, residents enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare, veterans, cancer patients, and Native Americans. The Quitline provides services including materials, text messaging, an online program, and referral to all Michigan residents.

Individual tobacco users can contact the Quitline directly at 1-800-QUIT-NOW, or enroll online at <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/>. Providers in all health care settings are also encouraged to refer their patients and clients to the Quitline. Additional information, including a fax referral form for providers, is available on the website.

Washtenaw County Health Department

Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs. Visit the Washtenaw County Health Department online at www.washtenaw.org/health or call 734-544-6700.

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