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Popular Quit Smoking Web Site Adds Chat Room

MARATHON, Florida Keys – One of the most effective aids for smokers who are trying to quit is talking directly other people who are trying to kick the habit too. A popular quit smoking web site opens a chat room today specifically developed for those who are trying to quit smoking.

The web site -- www.keystoquitsmoking.com – is sponsored by the Florida Keys Area Health Education Center (AHEC). Since December, the Florida Keys AHEC has offered a six-week quit smoking program free to Keys residents. To date, more than 350 people have signed up for the program.

The chat room is open to anyone who wants to quit smoking or needs help staying off cigarettes. A unique feature of the chat room is daily moderated sessions. Moderators include physicians, physician assistants, and registered nurses -- all certified as tobacco cessation specialists. A listing of the times these moderators will be available to counsel smokers and answer questions is posted on the web site.

“Many of those who signed up for our six-week Keys to Quit Smoking program have asked about an internet-based chat room that they could access any time, day or night,” said Michael Cunningham, CEO

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AD1 Chat Room

of the Florida Keys AHEC, the program sponsor. “This new chat room feature is another positive way we’re helping smokers quit.”

Gretchen Glacken from Key Largo, a former smoker, is an enthusiastic support of the chat room concept to help other smokers quit.

“I found that a chat room was invaluable when dealing with the emotional and physical issues associated with quitting smoking,” said Glacken. “When I was tempted to smoke a cigarette, all I needed to do was log on the chat room to talk to somebody in the same situation as me. They helped me and I helped them. I wouldn’t be an ex-smoker today without that chat room.”

“We realize that an effective chat room needs many people using it at all times of the day and night,” noted Cunningham. “So we are notifying all current and past program participants about it, and also publicizing it statewide to quickly increase the numbers of people using the chat room. Smokers who want to use the chat room need not participate in our AHEC program – the chat room is available to anyone, anywhere who is ready to quit.”

The Keys to Quit Smoking website lists details about the chat room and the entire program. The six-week program is free for everyone, and through the state of Florida Quitline, all smokers can get at least one month’s free supply of nicotine patches or gum. The web site also describes the special programs available for pregnant women and employers who want to help their employees quit smoking.

Counseling sessions are held in convenient locations throughout the Keys – Tavernier, Marathon, Big Pine Key, and Key West. There are also a variety of days and start times when the sessions are held to accommodate most schedules. Keys smokers who want to quit can go to the program’s web site or call (305) 743-7111 to sign up or for more information.

The Florida Keys AHEC is affiliated with the University of Miami Miller Medical School and promotes health and wellness through education, health assessments, and professional development using partnerships to provide a healthier, better educated community.

