



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

14 Harrington Road
Cranston, RI 02920-3080

TEL: (401) 462-3201

FAX: (401) 462-4304

MEDIA CONTACT:

Randal Edgar – BHDDH

Office: 401-462-3405

Cell: 401-316-4320

randal.edgar@bhddh.ri.gov

Great American Smokeout encourages smokers to take first step

(Nov. 19, 2025) — For some people, kicking the smoking habit is one of the hardest things they will ever do. The annual Great American Smokeout holds out one day as an opportunity to start that journey.

Hosted by the American Cancer Society, the Great American Smokeout is observed each November and falls this year on Thursday, Nov. 20.

The Smokeout encourages people to be smoke-free for one day and is also a reminder of the dangers of smoking, as well as the reality that smoking impacts some groups of people more than others. This includes people with behavioral health conditions, who according to numerous studies are much more likely to smoke.

“While smoking rates have dropped over the years, it’s also true that many people still smoke, including young people, and people in groups who we know are more likely to smoke,” said **Richard Leclerc**, Director of the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals. “All smokers can benefit from the message of the Great American Smokeout, which is that quitting this habit is a long-term commitment, one that begins with an important first step.”

“Quitting tobacco and nicotine products can be hard, and a support team can help you succeed,” said **Jerry Larkin**, M.D., Director of the Department of Health. “The Great American Smokeout is your chance to join in with friends, loved ones, neighbors, and everyone else who’s going smoke-free today for a healthier tomorrow.”

Rhode Island offers resources for people who would like to quit smoking. [QuitNowRI](#) (also known as the Rhode Island Nicotine Helpline) now offers comprehensive coaching and treatment to people interested in quitting. This includes five (5) phone counseling calls for all Rhode Islanders, regardless of insurance status, and free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) if medically eligible. Additional programs are available, including special services for people with behavioral health conditions and for people who use menthol tobacco products. To get started, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (Hablas español? Llame al 1-800-8-DEJALO) or visit [QuitNowRI.com](#).

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