

NEWS RELEASE

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Rocky Mountain Health Plans Launches Free Tobacco Cessation Program

Employer groups and individual Members offered free patches, gum and other tools including access to Colorado QuitLine coaches to help them quit smoking successfully

(GRAND JUNCTION, Colo.) – Rocky Mountain Health Plans is giving smokers a New Year’s present. Beginning January 1st, the Colorado-based, not-for-profit health plan is launching a free tobacco cessation program in partnership with the Colorado QuitLine. The program aims to help the health plan’s Members become tobacco free and to strengthen QuitLine’s ability to serve more Coloradans.

Any Rocky Mountain Health Plans employer group or individual Member that enrolls in the program can get help to quit smoking or using tobacco products. This help includes nicotine replacement gum and patches, certain tobacco cessation prescription drugs, and free access to the Colorado QuitLine counseling services. Members will not have to pay any out-of-pocket costs for the program.

“The best thing we can do for our Members is to help them stay healthy,” said Steve ErkenBrack, president and CEO of Rocky Mountain Health Plans. “That’s why we are giving them free tools to help them quit and access to experienced QuitLine coaches — many of whom have quit themselves and understand how hard quitting can be.” The new tobacco cessation program will also become a standard part of the Rocky Mountain benefit program for all existing individual and employer group Members.

(more)

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease, disability and death in the United States. Each year, an estimated 443,000 people die prematurely from smoking or exposure to second hand smoke, and another 8.6 million have a serious illness caused by smoking.

Coupled with the enormous health toll is the significant economic burden of tobacco use. Each year, more than \$96 billion is spent on medical care and employers experience another \$97 billion is lost in productivity.

Under the terms of the partnership between Rocky Mountain Health Plans and the Colorado QuitLine, which is operated by National Jewish Health and administered by the State Tobacco Education and Prevention Program, Rocky Mountain Health Plans will reimburse the QuitLine for services provided to its commercial group and individual Members. The agreement takes effect January 1, 2010.

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About Rocky Mountain Health Plans

Rocky Mountain Health Plans is a Colorado-based, not-for-profit organization that is uniquely positioned to understand the needs of Colorado's health care consumers. Founded in 1974, Rocky Mountain provides medical benefit plans and services to more than 160,000 enrollees. We offers a wide range of options including PPO, HMO, and Health Savings Account-eligible plans. Medical plans can be fully-insured, fully-insured with cost sharing options, or self-funded. Rocky Mountain is the first Western Slope employer to receive the Well Workplace award from the Wellness Councils of America and has a thirty-year history of serving businesses, individuals, families, Medicare and Medicaid-eligible persons, and children who receive care under the Child Health Plan Plus program. For more information, contact Rocky Mountain Health Plans at 800-843-0719 or visit www.rmhp.org.