



The Public Health Impact of CDC's "Tips from Former Smokers" Campaign

The scientific evidence is substantial and clear: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Tips from Former Smokers campaign is an enormous success, prompting millions of smokers to try to quit and helping hundreds of thousands to quit for good. It is also cost-effective.

In 2012, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducted the first ever federally-funded national media campaign aimed at reducing smoking. The campaign, *Tips from Former Smokers* (*Tips*), depicted former smokers coping with devastating diseases and disabilities caused by their tobacco use. Studies demonstrate that the *Tips* campaign is not only effective at reducing tobacco use but is also extremely cost-effective. Between 2012 and 2018, CDC estimates that the *Tips* campaign motivated more than 16.4 million smokers to make a quit attempt and helped approximately one million smokers to quit for good.¹

- A 2020 cost-effectiveness analysis estimated lifetime healthcare costs and benefits associated with the *Tips* campaign and concluded that public education campaigns like *Tips* help smokers to quit, improve health outcomes and can reduce health care costs.² Specifically, from 2012 – 2018, the campaign was found to help prevent 129,100 smoking-related deaths and reduce healthcare spending by \$7.3 billion. Other cost-savings include: \$11,400 per lifetime quit; \$9,100 per LY (life-year) gained; and \$56,800 per premature deaths avoided.
- Another 2020 study that estimated the budgetary impact of a national year-long anti-tobacco media campaign found that running a sustained media campaign like *Tips* would reduce Medicaid spending by \$3.6 billion, Medicare spending by \$1.37 billion, and private insurer spending by \$180 million over 10 years.³
- A recent study provided additional evidence that the *Tips* campaign supports continued abstinence from cigarette smoking.⁴ The analysis evaluated the impact of exposure to the *Tips* campaign from 2014 to 2019 (excluding 2017) and found that higher levels of exposure to *Tips* ads (as measured by GRPs) was associated with lower odds of smoking relapse among U.S. adult former cigarette smokers.
- A study published in *The Lancet* estimated that, as a result of the 12 week campaign in 2012, 1.6 million smokers tried to quit smoking and more than 100,000 likely quit smoking permanently. Researchers estimate that by quitting, former smokers added more than a third of a million years of life to the U.S. population.⁵ In addition, the 2012 campaign inspired millions of nonsmokers to encourage friends and family members to quit smoking.⁶
- A study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* found that in its first year (2012), the *Tips* campaign helped 100,000 smokers to quit and saved about 17,000 people from a premature death. The campaign, with a modest budget of \$48 million, spent only \$480 per smoker who quit and \$393 per year of life saved. The campaign is considered a public health "best buy" because the \$393 per year of life saved is far below the \$50,000 that is an accepted benchmark for cost-effective public health programs.⁷
- A longitudinal study of adult smokers found that the 2012 campaign significantly increased intentions to quit within the next 30 days and within the next 6 months and quit intentions were greater among smokers with more exposure to the campaign. Campaign exposure was also associated with increased knowledge of negative health outcomes caused by smoking and increased worries about health.⁸
- The 2013 *Tips* campaign, which aired on a one week on, one week off basis for the first 12 weeks of the 16 week campaign also had a substantial impact on public health, generating more than 150,000 additional calls to 1800-QUIT-NOW (there were 353,000 total calls) and almost 2.8 million additional unique visitors to www.smokefree.gov. The campaign's pulsing strategy clearly shows that calls to the quitline increased sharply when the campaign was on the air, suggesting that the campaign motivated many smokers to try to quit.⁹ These numbers likely underrepresent

the number of people who tried to quit smoking as a result of the campaign because the number of people who seek help quitting is a small fraction of the people who actually make quit attempts. Previous experience from state and local media campaigns that promote quitlines indicate that at least five to six smokers try to quit on their own for every person who calls a quitline.¹⁰

- A study of the 2013 campaign found that the campaign reached 7 out of 10 smokers and increased knowledge of lesser known health effects and awareness of tobacco cessation resources.¹¹
- A 2012 study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* found that anti-smoking ads which feature highly emotional and graphic content, similar to the themes used in the *Tips* campaign, are very effective at motivating smokers to try to quit. Researchers found that both the amount and type of ads seen by New York State smokers affected their likelihood of quitting, with greater exposure to emotional or graphic ads having the greatest impact on quit attempts. The impact of the ads was similar across income and education levels, as well as for smokers with varying desires to quit.¹²

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¹ Murphy-Hoefer R, et al. Association between the Tips From Former Smokers Campaign and Smoking Cessation Among Adults, United States, 2012–2018. *Preventing Chronic Disease* 2020;17:200052; CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/about/impact/campaign-impact-results.html>; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), FY 2017 Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees <http://www.cdc.gov/budget/documents/fy2017/fy-2017-cdc-congressional-justification.pdf>; see also,

² Shrestha SS, et al. Cost Effectiveness of the Tips From Former Smokers Campaign—US, 2012–2018. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 2020 Dec 23.

³ Maciosek, Michael V., et al., "Budgetary impact from multiple perspectives of sustained antitobacco national media campaigns to reduce the arms of cigarette smoking," *Tobacco Control*, April, 2020.

⁴ Davis K, et al. The Impact of the Tips from Former Smokers® Campaign on Reducing Cigarette Smoking Relapse. *Journal of Smoking Cessation*. 2022 Nov 22;2022.

⁵ McAfee, T, et al., "Effect of the first federally funded US antismoking national media campaign," *The Lancet* September 9, 2013. During the 12 week campaign, calls to the toll-free number that provides help to smokers trying to quit (1800-QUIT-NOW) more than doubled and the number of hits to www.smokefree.gov, the government's website offering quit assistance, more than tripled. Specifically, calls to the toll-free quitline number increased 132 percent, or 207,519 additional calls, and the number of unique visitors to the cessation website increased 428 percent, or 510,571 additional unique visitors, compared to the same time period in 2011.

⁶ McAfee, T, et al., "Effect of the first federally funded US antismoking national media campaign," *The Lancet* September 9, 2013.

⁷ Xu, Xin, et al., "Cost-Effectiveness Analysis of the First Federally Funded Antismoking Campaign," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 2014.

⁸ Duke, Jennifer C., et al., "Impact of a US anti-smoking national media campaign on beliefs, cognitions and quit intentions," *Health Education Research* Vol. 30 No. 3, 2015.

⁹ CDC, "Impact of a National Tobacco Education Campaign on Weekly Numbers of Quitline Calls and Website Visitors – United States, March 4-June 23, 2013," *MMWR* 62(37), September 20, 2013.

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6237a3.htm?s_cid=mm6237a3.htm_w

¹⁰ CDC, Office on Smoking and Health, "Calls to Quitline hit record high after CDC national tobacco ad campaign launch," Press release April 2, 2012. http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2012/p0402_quitline.html

¹¹ Huang, L., et al., "The US National Tips From Former Smokers Antismoking Campaign: Promoting Awareness of Smoking-Related Risks, Cessation Resources and Cessation Behaviors," *Health Educ Behavior* 42(4): 480-86, August 2015.

¹² Farrelly, MC, et al, "Promotion of Smoking Cessation with Emotional and/or Graphic Antismoking Advertising," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 43 (5) 2012.