

# Veterans & Tobacco Use

## Fact Sheet

### WHY DO MANY VETERANS START USING TOBACCO IN THE MILITARY AND/OR DURING DEPLOYMENTS?<sup>5</sup>

- To stay awake
- To manage stress
- Something to do during down times
- To make social connections
- To mourn loss

### WHY DO VETERANS CONTINUE TO USE TOBACCO?<sup>5</sup>

- To regulate mood
- To help with mental health issues
- To manage stress
- To feed addiction
- To cope
- To manage injuries

### WHY DO VETERANS WANT TO QUIT?<sup>5</sup>

- Health
- Family
- Break dependency
- Serve as a better example
- Side effects (teeth, breath, smell)
- Cost
- Social norms

### WHAT HELPS VETERANS QUIT?<sup>5</sup>

- Personalized approach
- Peer to peer support
- Free/low cost NRTs
- Individualized approach (no classes)
- Innovative incentives
- Inclusion of family, support people
- Convenient and accessible services

### WHAT FREE RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP VETERANS QUIT?

- California Smokers' Helpline: 877-222-8387 (VA locator)
- 800-NO-BUTTS
- Ucanquit2.org
- Veterans Affairs (VA): [publichealth.va.gov/smoking](http://publichealth.va.gov/smoking)

#### Citations

1. <http://www.calvet.ca.gov/vetservices/Demographics.aspx>
2. [http://www.stripes.com/polopoly\\_fs/1.161474!/menu/standard/file/pew\\_research\\_family\\_ties\\_EMBARGOED.PDF](http://www.stripes.com/polopoly_fs/1.161474!/menu/standard/file/pew_research_family_ties_EMBARGOED.PDF)
3. Klevens RM, Giovino GA, Peddicord JP, Nelson DE, Mowery P, Grummer-Strawn L. The association between veteran status and cigarette-smoking behaviors. *Am J Prev Med* 1995;11(4):245-50.
4. Department of Veteran Affairs. VHA Survey of Veteran Enrollees' Health and Reliance Upon VA; 2008. [http://www4.va.gov/HEALTHPOLICYPLANNING/SoE2008/2008\\_SoE\\_Report.pdf](http://www4.va.gov/HEALTHPOLICYPLANNING/SoE2008/2008_SoE_Report.pdf) Accessed 2013 September 11 .
5. Tobacco Use Among Iraq- and Afghanistan-Era Veterans: A Qualitative Study of Barriers, Facilitators, and Treatment Preferences: [http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2012/11\\_0131.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2012/11_0131.htm) Accessed 2013 October 3.



### DID YOU KNOW?

- California has the highest number of Veterans in the United States of America (1.8 million).<sup>1</sup>
- Less than one half of one percent of the nation has served at any given time during the last 10 years of war.<sup>2</sup>
- About 74% of Veterans report a history of cigarette use.<sup>3,4</sup>

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- When working with Veterans, remember to take a personalized approach.
- Be sure all staff interacting with Veterans understands the importance of being culturally appropriate.
- Don't forget to include family members and support people in cessation work.
- Contact Project UNIFORM to assist in your process.