

# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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## **New Report Reveals Most States Are Not Quit-Friendly for Smokers**

**ARKANSAS** – Most states are falling far short of providing the help that millions need to quit smoking, according to the American Lung Association’s “[Helping Smokers Quit: Tobacco Cessation Coverage 2011](#)” report. Arkansas did better than average, holding the rank as the 6<sup>th</sup> most quit-friendly state in the country according to the American Lung Association. The report calls on federal and state policymakers to make quit-smoking services an urgent priority to help citizens live longer and more productive lives.

For the first time since launching the annual report in 2008, the American Lung Association identifies the five most quit-friendly and the five least quit-friendly states based on the coverage of quit smoking programs and treatments available in each state. The five most quit-friendly states are Maine, North Dakota, Delaware, Oklahoma, and Wyoming. The five least quit-friendly states are Georgia, Louisiana, Alabama, Maryland, and New Jersey.

“We congratulate the federal government and the few states, including Arkansas that are making important progress in this life-and-death effort,” said Sara Dreiling, Chief Executive Officer of the American Lung Association, *Plains-Gulf Region*. “Although Arkansas is in the top 10 most quit-friendly states on this list, it joins the majority of states that are failing to do enough to help smokers quit. Even the most quit-friendly states still have more work to do, and we encourage policymakers at all levels to provide access to quit smoking treatments and services that will save lives and curb health costs.”

Despite greater public understanding about the health risks of smoking, 443,000 people still die each year from tobacco-related illnesses and secondhand smoke exposure. Quitting smoking is difficult, and most smokers need help to quit for good.

The American Lung Association urges every state to provide all Medicaid recipients and state employees with comprehensive, easily accessible tobacco cessation medications and counseling. A comprehensive benefit includes all seven medications and three types of counseling recommended by the U.S. Public Health Service for helping smokers quit.

“By not providing all smokers help to quit, the U.S. is missing out on longer, happier, more productive lives and economic improvements,” said Dreiling. “Arkansas cannot afford the economic and health consequences of failing to make it a priority to help smokers quit.”

“Helping Smokers Quit: Tobacco Cessation Coverage 2011” is available at [www.Lung.org](http://www.Lung.org).

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**About the American Lung Association**

Now in its second century, the American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. With your generous support, the American Lung Association is “Fighting for Air” through research, education and advocacy. For more information about the American Lung Association or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or visit [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org).