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National President and  
CEO

January 7, 2019

Jeffrey M. Zirger  
Acting Lead, Information Collection Review Office  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
1600 Clifton Road NE, MS-D74  
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

Re: Request for Comment on the National Quitline Data Warehouse  
(Docket No. CDC-2018-0097)

Dear Mr. Zirger:

The American Lung Association appreciates the opportunity to submit comments in response to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) request to assess the information collection project titled "National Quitline Data Warehouse" (NQDW).

The American Lung Association is the oldest voluntary public health organization in the United States and is committed to eliminating tobacco use and tobacco-related disease. Across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, Lung Association volunteers and staff help smokers quit through health education programs and through policy changes. Lung Association staff have also served as tobacco cessation subject matter experts at national conferences and CDC meetings.

The American Lung Association has decades of experience with providing tobacco cessation services. The Lung Association's Lung Helpline is staffed by nurses, respiratory therapists and smoking cessation counselors and has operated the Illinois Tobacco Quitline since 2001. More than one million Americans have quit smoking using the American Lung Association's *Freedom From Smoking* program. The program, often referred to as the gold-standard for tobacco cessation, is available as an in-person group clinic, a self-help guide, by telephone and online in our newest option, [Freedom From Smoking Plus](#).

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, almost half a million Americans die each year from a tobacco related illness.<sup>1</sup> While the smoking rate among the general population is falling, 14 percent of adults in the United States still smoke.<sup>2</sup> Among all U.S. adult cigarette smokers in 2015, nearly seven out of ten (68%) reported wanting to quit smoking completely, but fewer than one in ten quit successfully.<sup>3</sup>

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Unfortunately, on average, it takes a person more than eight quit attempts to quit for good.<sup>4</sup> The Lung Association is committed to helping all smokers quit by ensuring they have access to cessation treatment, including phone counseling and quitlines.

The Lung Association supports the CDC collecting the core set of information through the National Quitline Data Warehouse (NQDW). Data from the NQDW has been used to measure the number of tobacco users being served by state quitlines, demonstrate the role quitlines play in promoting tobacco cessation, and improve quitline operations, service quality and access. The data also helps the CDC, state and various other stakeholders improve states' understanding and utilization of state-specific data and allow for comparisons between a single state's data and national data.

Additionally, the individual-level data collected helps determine which key subgroups of tobacco users are contacting their state quitlines and highlight where improvements can be made to ensure priority populations are being reached. Priority populations are identified as groups that bear the burden of significant tobacco-related disparities. In this instance, priority populations are identified as: African American/black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, and Low Socioeconomic Status.

With respect to the NQDW Seven-Month Follow-up Questionnaire, the Lung Association recommends that the CDC administer it not only to tobacco users who received services from the Asian Smokers Quitline, but also to all other respondents. Consistent data collection will help in providing more accurate statistical analyses for researchers and is more reliable than estimations. In addition to the seven-month follow up, the American Lung Association recommends that the CDC administer follow-ups at one month and three months. Follow up assessments at these time intervals will provide opportunities to intervene early in the process and assist individuals that have relapsed.

Quitting smoking is the single most important step an individual can take to improve their health, but it is very difficult for most people. The state quitlines are an effective tool in helping provide resources, medications and counseling to tobacco users who contact them. The Lung Association urges the CDC to continue and expand data collection through the NQDW. The NQDW serves as an important resource tool in helping reduce the prevalence of smoking in the United States. The American Lung Association appreciates the opportunity to provide comment and looks forward to continuing to work with the CDC on its cessation efforts.

Sincerely,



Deborah P. Brown  
Chief Mission Officer



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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014 [accessed 2018 Dec 10].

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Tobacco Product Use Among Adults – United States, 2017](#). Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2018; 67(44):1225-32 [accessed 2018 December 11]

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Quitting Smoking Among Adults—United States, 2000–2015](#). Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 2017;65(52):1457-64 [accessed 2018 Dec 10].

<sup>4</sup> American Cancer Society. [How to Quit Smoking or Smokeless Tobacco](#). [accessed 2018 Dec 10]

