

**VA**U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

# Press Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Feb. 20: Great American Spit Out

VA NorCal encourages Veterans to quit smokeless tobacco,  
provides library of online resources and phone/text lines

**MATHER, Calif.** — As part of the annual Great American Spit Out on Feb. 20, [VA Northern California Health Care System](#) (VA NorCal) has joined VA medical centers across the country in helping Veteran smokeless tobacco users quit chew, dip, or snuff and create a long-term plan to stay tobacco-free for good.

“Many Veterans don’t know chew and other smokeless tobacco can cause gum disease and cancer,” said VA NorCal Director David Stockwell. “There are many worthwhile reasons to quit but preventing oral cancer or tooth loss is reason enough to quit today.”

VA resources to help Veterans quit smokeless tobacco include:

- **Quit VET**, a toll-free national tobacco quitline, at 855-QUIT-VET (855-784-8838). Quitline counselors are available between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Eastern time, Monday through Friday, for tobacco cessation counseling. Quitline counselors can help Veterans build a quit plan and offer continued support through follow-up calls and counseling. For more information, visit [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco/quit-vet.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco/quit-vet.asp).
- **SmokefreeVET**, a text messaging program that sends daily text messages of support and encouragement. Veterans who are quitting tobacco can sign up at [smokefree.gov/VET](http://smokefree.gov/VET) or by texting VET to 47848. For more information, visit [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco/smokefreevet.asp](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco/smokefreevet.asp).
- **Smokeless Tobacco: A Veteran’s Guide for Quitting**, a [free online workbook](#) that provides assistance with quitting smokeless tobacco.

A better and brighter today, with healthier teeth and gums, can begin in 2020. For Veterans who have thought about quitting smokeless tobacco but haven’t picked a date, or those who have tried to quit before and are ready to try again, Feb. 20 is a great time to make a change!

For more information about tobacco cessation, visit [www.mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco](http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco).

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