

DHSS 2011 Wellness Superstar

Kevin Cain, a Computer Information Technologist Specialist with DHSS-ITSD is February's Wellness Superstar because of his commitment to overcome tobacco addiction after 31 years of smoking! Kevin is an inspiration to other smokers. Here he shares some of his story and strategies that helped him kick the habit for good.

Quitting Isn't Easy

Kevin smoked his first cigarette around age 15 because it was the "cool" thing to do at that time. He was a regular smoker by the age of 16.

"I tried quitting in my 20's a couple of times but seemed to pick it back up again in 30 days or less. I tried a few times in my thirties but the strong drive of the addiction would wear me down in a few days. At age 46, I was coughing almost every morning and wheezing often when I would lie down. I was able to overcome the power of the addiction through the smoking cessation classes, [Lifestyle Ladder] health coach, Chantix anti-smoking aid and staying busy. I occasionally have a craving but it is minor and over quickly."

Why Now?

Kevin cites many factors which influenced his decision to quit smoking, one of which was the new tobacco policy implemented at DHSS last year.

"The decision had been weighing on my mind for about a year. I just never found a 'good time' to quit. Smoking addiction will enhance your brain's ability to come up with multiple excuses as to why it just isn't a good time to quit. The policy made it more difficult to satisfy the addiction and brought the addiction to the forefront of my daily work habits."

He named health, the price of cigarettes and shortness of breath when trying to enjoy sports or other activities as his main reasons for quitting. Adding to Kevin's decision was the fact that many establishments had "no smoking" policies and he did not smoke in his home because of his son.

Strategies for Success

Kevin reports that the improvement in health, especially his improved breathing ability is a major motivator in remaining smoke-free.

"I could feel a difference in breathing in the first couple weeks. I no longer have the cough or other morning ailments I once had."

Kevin has found new habits, such as working out, to help him beat his cravings for cigarettes.

"The driving force for me [remaining smoke free] is the ability to breath so much better. I workout at the YMCA as often as I can. You have to stay busy or keep your mind occupied during cravings. If a craving comes on then immediately find something to do."

He also mentioned managing stress as another important strategy for remaining smoke-free. Kevin offers this advice to anyone considering kicking their smoking habit to the curb:

"You can try the smoking aids like Chantix but work closely with your doctor during use. No matter how many times you get weak and light up, always quit again the very next day and do not wait until the next weekend or a more convenient time. Do not keep any tobacco products at the house if possible."

We thank Kevin for sharing his experience with us and wish him well as he continues to be smoke-free.

Know a Wellness Superstar?
Send an email to
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