



# Brief: Texas Quitline & Latinos

This brief will assess the utilization and participation of Latinos to the Texas Quitline and explore how improved accessibility to this resource can enhance our *bienestar* (community wellbeing) by promoting tobacco cessation through the availability of counseling and coaching services for the population. The Quitline complements a range of efforts to make Texas smoke-free.

On August 19, 2010, San Antonio joined the largest cities in Texas in becoming a smoke free community. This adds one more city to the 37% of cities who have comprehensive Clean Indoor Air ordinances in Texas. The health status of all Texans would improve significantly if the whole State becomes a smoke free.

With many cities and counties in Texas moving toward smoke-free communities, the transition for Latinos is compounded by the stark realities of health and health insurance disparities, financial insecurity, and low educational attainment.

Although the Latino population is slightly less likely to smoke compared to the general population, Latinos are faced with specific unique challenges that create a higher risk for second hand smoking exposure and tobacco use. A significant contributing factor to this increased risk is targeted marketing by the tobacco industry at Latinos. Increased advertising at establishments with high Latino patronage and employment and sponsorship of ethnic celebrations has resulted in a higher propensity of smoking exposure (O’Hegarty et al, 2010). Having smoke free ordinances in place and raising cigarette taxes has been proven as effective strategies to reduce tobacco use – encourages people to quick smoking and promotes tobacco cessations.

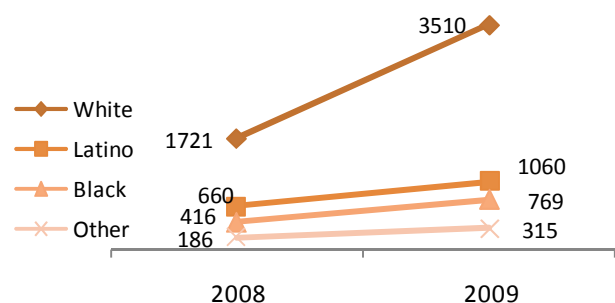
Research indicates not all Latinos have the similar prevalence of smoking. For example, data demonstrates that Cuban Americans are more likely to be smokers compared to Mexican Americans, Mexican immigrants, and Central and South Americans. While for Latinas, the data suggests the level of acculturation into U.S. society increases the likelihood of smoking.

An effective Quitline is an important program among interventions to help reduce smoking and exposures to second-hand smoke among Latinos. Smoke free ordinances plus targeted prevention initiatives and ‘quit smoking’ interventions programs are vitally important approaches.

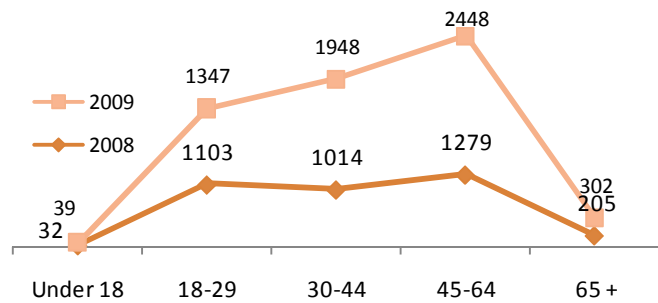
**Background:** The Texas Quitline is a free telephone-based tobacco cessation program that provides information, therapy, and counseling service for callers as well as community referrals to get more help if requested. Quitlines operates in all 50 states, all American territories, the District of Columbia, and all of Canada. The US Public Health Service’s clinical practice guidelines (2008) state that a smoker who calls the state Quitline is more than twice as likely to quit tobacco; when Quitline counseling is utilized in conjunction with medication therapy (most often Nicotine Replacement Therapy, or NRT) the odds of successfully quitting are tripled. Research denotes that Quitline coaching and counseling is effective across a wide range of populations, including Latino smokers (Burns & Levinson, 2010). Unfortunately, this brief can only provide a snapshot of the utilization and characteristics of Latinos to the Texas Quitline due to the limitations of available data. For further insight into the needs, utilization, and comparisons of diverse callers the current data collection methods would require some review and improvements for more adequate analysis.

**Findings:** Based on data provided by the North American Quitline Consortium (NAQC), 6,555 calls and fax referrals came into the Texas Quitline in 2009, an increase of 76% over 2008. Latinos make up 17.1% of the state’s smoking population, and represent a similar proportion of callers to the Quitline (18.6% of callers in 2009 self-identified as Latino). Compared to Blacks, Latinos did utilize the Quitline more frequently but less than Whites.

Texas Quitline Callers by Race/Ethnicity



**Texas Quitline Callers by Age Group**

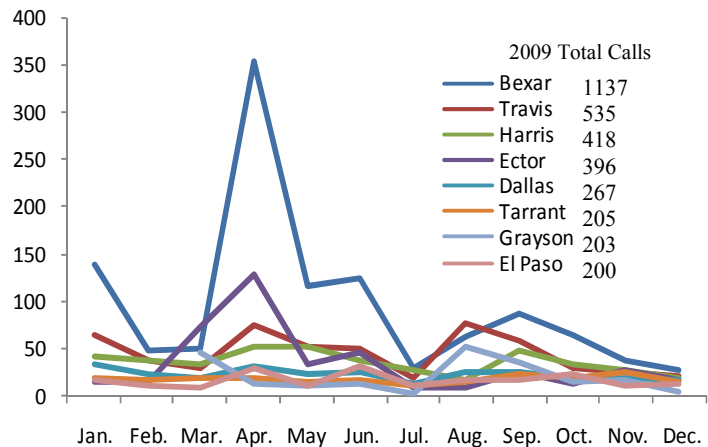


Callers to the Texas Quitline in 2008 and 2009 were primarily by individuals between the age of 45-64 and the majority of callers identified themselves as female comprising 52% and 57% of the calls respectively. Almost half of all callers in 2009 did not have health insurance, and 20% of callers had less than a high school diploma.

Among calls to the Texas Quitline at this point, only 2.7% of all calls in 2009 were in Spanish, a total of 170 calls out of over 6,200. This is a decrease in Spanish callers to the Texas Quitline compared to the number of calls in 2008 (7%). These percentages are well below the Census Bureau estimates that 30% of Texas homes in 2008 spoke Spanish at home and in which 44% speaking English less than “very well”. Accessibility barriers may be deterring Latinos from use of the Texas Quitline and limiting utilization by Spanish speaking Latinos.

**Geographically speaking, the majority of calls came from Bexar county, with 17.5% of calls originating from this county.** Bexar county callers represented 0.38% of the smoking population. There were more calls from Bexar County than Dallas, Tarrant, Harris, and El Paso counties combined. Interestingly, the combined counties also belong to municipalities that either have a comprehensive smoke-free ordinance, smoke-free coalitions or have been the target of marketing or advertising. For these counties, the proportion of the smoking population who called into the Quitline was small—Harris county 0.06% , and El Paso 0.17% of 2009 calls. **Less than 5% of all calls were from all fifteen of the Texas-Mexico border counties combined.**

**2009: Monthly Calls to Quitlines by Top 8 Counties**



For Quitline callers, the most frequent response to how they heard about the Texas Quitline was via TV advertising, family or friends, TV news story or radio. The type of support requested by callers were assistance in quitting, followed by more counseling and community referrals in both 2008 and 2009.

**Conclusion:**

Ultimately, a comprehensive media campaign tailored specifically to the Latino population will clearly bolster the number of Latino and Spanish speaking calls to the Texas Quitline. Unfortunately, anecdotal data suggests that the Quitline itself remains inaccessible for a big segment of this population. Spanish speaking counselors are not available at any time and must call back in order to initiate the counseling process.

Research shows that a comprehensive marketing campaign aimed at Spanish speaking Latinos can be successful if implemented correctly through the proper channels. Burns & Levinson (2010) noted that a Spanish language media campaign program in Colorado initiated through Spanish television and Spanish movie theaters increased Latino calls to the state Quitline by 57.6%. Most notably, the media campaign brought respondents that were predominantly young (under 45 years of age), more often Spanish speaking, less educated, and more likely to be uninsured. Small increases were noted overall in total number of calls from other younger demographics as well as Spanish speaking non-Latino callers.

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The effectiveness of any Cessation program including the Quitline must begin to address the needs of diverse populations and their linguistic needs by providing:

- **Readily available Spanish speaking counselors to improve accessibility.** It is important to consider how to properly engage Hispanic populations when they call the Quitline. Survey questions are important but can easily deter callers from continued communication.
  - **The integration of a “Promotora” style model as a way to culturally and linguistically connect to Spanish speaking callers.** (O’Hegarty et al, 2010). Given the impersonal nature of the Quitline process, Promotoras can engage in a follow-up with callers to improve quit rates.
  - **Engagement of community based organizations and/or local community health clinics are essential for success.** Latinos have expressed concern about giving personal information to what seems to be a government agency, but if local well known Latino organizations are engaged in promoting the Quitline, Latinos would more likely share their information.
  - **Target television media Quitline marketing at Spanish speakers.** In 2009, there were 85 days of paid television advertising in roughly 100 counties and 6 coalitions/markets. Three of the five television media campaigns were not targeted to anyone in particular, with the other two media campaigns focused individually on males or females.
  - **More funding for the Quitline for targeted outreach efforts and resources** to better serve a diverse Texas population. One major barrier to the continued success of Quitline is funding. In 2007, Texas budgeted only 2.3% of the recommended level of funding for tobacco control services. This ranked the state at 47th among all the states for funding tobacco control initiatives.
  - **Free and/or reduced** Nicotine Replacement Therapy, medications and increased number of counseling sessions help people quit and stay quit. All Medicaid and Medicare patients need to receive these services for free.
  - **Institutionalization of cessation** in community health centers, including direct Fax Referral forms to the Quitlines would promote cessation in every visit to the health care providers.
- ◆ **Special Note:** Our appreciation is extended to the National Latino Tobacco Control Network (NLTCN) for their collaborative review and recommendations of this “Quitline and Latino” Brief.
- ◆ La Fe PREC is a member of the NLTCN.

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