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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**EXCELA HEALTH ENCOURAGES TOBACCO USERS TO 'QUIT FOR LOVE'**

**GREENSBURG, PA, February 19, 2012 ...** Excelsa Health is encouraging tobacco users to "Quit for Love" as part of a statewide campaign offering free nicotine patches and counseling, and reminding residents of the local resources available to aid them in their attempt to quit smoking.

"On average, it takes anywhere from five to eight attempts before an individual is successful in quitting the use of tobacco," said Norene Auer, Excelsa Health's certified tobacco treatment specialist. "We want smokers to know that we are here to be a resource. Through counseling, free patches and group support we are hoping individuals quit and stay tobacco free."

Free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) patches are available as part of the Pennsylvania Department of Health's annual "Quit for Love" Campaign. Launched on Feb. 14, this outreach effort is designed to encourage tobacco users to consider quitting the use of tobacco products for the ones they love.

Individuals interested in receiving a free NRT kit must call the Pa. Free Quitline at 800-QUIT NOW (800-784-8669). Quit coaches will ask callers if they are ready to set a quit date and have any medical conditions that would rule out the safe use of nicotine patches. Callers will then enroll in a series of free tobacco counseling sessions. The NRT packets will be mailed to them after they complete their first counseling session. The kits will be offered for approximately six to eight weeks, while supplies last.

Excelsa Health also offers group support to smokers who want to kick the habit. A six-week class meets Thursdays beginning 5 to 6:30 p.m., March 1, Conference Room B, First Floor, Westmoreland Hospital. For help quitting tobacco use, visit [www.excelahealth.org](http://www.excelahealth.org) or contact Excelsa Health's Call Center, toll free, 1-877-771-1234. Individuals can also visit [www.DeterminedToQuit.com](http://www.DeterminedToQuit.com).