



PRESS RELEASE

The *Quit to Win!* Challenge: 15,804 participants in 2010

Montreal, May 10, 2010 (Update of April 30, 2010 press release) – A positive balance sheet for the *Quit to Win!* Challenge in its 11th edition: registrations totaled 15,804 participants from all regions of Québec. The new spokesman for the campaign in 2010, comedian José Gaudet, was instrumental in motivating women and men (61% and 39% of registrations respectively) to commit to not smoking between March 1 and April 11. His message, tinged with humor, seems to have been especially well received by younger smokers, with participants between the ages of 20 and 34 counting for a large proportion of this year's registrations (40 %).

We're betting that the idea of taking up the *Challenge* at the same time as a comedian much appreciated by the public, matched with the chance of winning more than \$10,000 in prizes, no doubt prompted participants to sign up in large numbers!

An advantageous formula

Registering in pairs – with a sponsor (62% of the participants) or with another smoker who also wants to quit (38% of the participants) – in addition to the support provided, make it possible, on average, for close to 2 out of 3 participants to succeed in not smoking during the 6 weeks of the *Challenge*.

"The idea is for people to never be alone in their efforts to increase their chances to succeed," explains Dr. Louis Gagnon, co-president of ACTI-MENU, an organization associated with the Prevention Division of the Montreal Heart Institute, which coordinates the *Quit to Win!* Challenge. "The support kit offered by Jean Coutu, the website QuitChallenge.ca, the *I'm Butting Out!* e-mails and the Ligne j'Arrête helpline are some of the forms of support offered free of charge to participants. The dynamism of the forum and the exchanges on the Facebook page and group also show that participants are eager to provide mutual encouragement and assistance."

The support was improved and chances of success maximized this year for 500 participants and subscribers to TELUS Mobility thanks to the STOMP program, a pilot project which offered advice, tips and words of encouragement by text messaging. "The support carries on well beyond the six weeks of the *Challenge*," adds Dr. Gagnon. "E-mails of encouragement are sent out for a year after participants' quitting date to keep them on course in their new life as former smokers."

A Challenge that still has its raison d'être

After 11 years in existence, the *Quit to Win! Challenge* remains popular and relevant in a province that, according to Statistics Canada, has between 19% and 23% of smokers (which represents between 1,226,000 and 1,542,296 people) and where more than half of them would like to finish with the habit. In effect, according to the Research Firm of the National Survey Centre, 58% of Québec smokers foresee quitting smoking over the next 6 months.

The success rate of the *Challenge* is excellent, something that is confirmed, year after year, by an assessment carried out by the Public Health Department of Montreal. The campaign offers an effective method of quitting smoking, and moreover is integrated into the cessation services of the government, among them the Ligne j'Arrête helpline and the Quit Smoking Centers.

About the *Quit to Win! Challenge*

The *Quit to Win! Challenge* is an initiative of ACTI-MENU, which is associated with the Prevention Division of the Montreal Heart Institute. It is carried out in partnership with a number of public and private organizations, including the Québec Ministry of Health and Social Services, the Québec Public Health Departments, the Canadian Cancer Society, Jean Coutu, Pfizer, Novartis and TELUS Health Solutions. The Québec initiative was inspired by the World Health Organization's large-scale international *Quit & Win* challenge, which originated in Finland. Since 2000, approximately 295,000 smokers have taken part in the *Quit to Win! Challenge*.

SOURCE

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