

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 11, 2017

CONTACTS:

Nicole Dueffert, Truth Initiative, 202-454-5589

Kelley Luckstein, Mayo Clinic, 507-284-5005

## **TRUTH INITIATIVE LAUNCHES ADVANCED QUIT-SMOKING PROGRAM FOR EMPLOYERS AND HEALTH PLANS**

*Digital EX Program reduces financial toll of tobacco addiction*

WASHINGTON, May 11, 2017 – Truth Initiative®, in collaboration with Mayo Clinic, today announced the EX® Program, an innovative quit-smoking program designed for employers, health systems and health plans to offer to their employees and members. The fully digital program expands upon EX, the highly successful consumer platform launched in 2008 that has helped more than 800,000 smokers. Research shows that following the EX plan quadruples a smoker's chance of quitting.

EX Program participants receive digital coaching and medication support from tobacco treatment specialists at the Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center and Truth Initiative, along with proven quitting tools and an online community of thousands of smokers and ex-smokers. Employers and health plans receive frequent reports on employee engagement and outcomes, along with guidance on promoting the program and setting workplace tobacco policy. The EX Program also helps employers meet requirements for wellness programs under the Affordable Care Act.

"We developed the EX Program to fill a gap in the market," said Robin Koval, CEO and President of Truth Initiative, the national public health organization dedicated to making tobacco use a thing of the past. "Organizations are still burdened with the financial and health impacts of smoking, and many are frustrated with the poor results they're seeing from wellness programs. Tobacco use is a complex addiction that requires specialized treatment from a provider with deep expertise and experience. We aim to be that provider."

Statistics make clear why an innovative, advanced approach is needed:

- 68 percent of smokers want to quit.
- 55 percent of smokers make a quit attempt annually, yet only seven percent are successful.
- Each year a smoker costs an employer nearly \$6,000 more than an employee who has never smoked.

The Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center has a longstanding collaboration with Truth Initiative in delivering EX to consumers. Weekly blogs, and an active presence in the EX community, have established Mayo Clinic as a valued source of expert advice and guidance. "The EX Program eliminates virtually all of the barriers to effective treatment and provides

ongoing support through the ups and downs of tobacco cessation,” said J. Taylor Hays, M.D., medical director of the Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center. “We are excited to build upon our relationship with Truth Initiative in this innovative program.”

The EX Program is designed to be as effective as phone-based coaching, but more accessible, flexible and cost effective. Today, 95% of U.S. adults own a cellphone, and nearly 9 in 10 use the Internet. “The ability to reach smokers with a digital quit smoking program is unprecedented. Our research has shown that online, interactive interventions are as effective as face-to-face and quitline interventions, but at far lower costs,” said Dr. Amanda Graham, SVP of Innovations at Truth Initiative and head of the EX Program. “With the EX Program, smokers can connect with experts and peers at any time, from any device, for as long as they need. Use of the EX community is an independent predictor of success, and 93 percent of members say they would recommend EX to other smokers who want to quit.”

The EX Program's inaugural health-system client is CHI Mercy Health (Mercy), a private, not-for-profit medical center in Roseburg, Oregon. Mercy, affiliated with the nation's second-largest Catholic health network, will offer the EX Program to employees, patients and all residents of Douglas County.

Organizations interested in learning how the EX Program differs from their existing quit-smoking program or that wish to offer their smokers a modern approach to quitting, can visit [theexprogram.com](http://theexprogram.com).

### **About Truth Initiative**

Truth Initiative is a national public health organization that is inspiring tobacco-free lives and building a culture where youth and young adults reject tobacco. The truth about tobacco and the tobacco industry are at the heart of our nationally-recognized, **truth**<sup>®</sup> <https://www.thetruth.com> public-education campaign, our rigorous scientific research and policy studies, and our innovative community and youth engagement programs supporting populations at high risk of using tobacco. The Washington D.C.-based organization, formerly known as Legacy, was established and funded through the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between attorneys general from 46 states, five U.S. territories, and the tobacco industry. To learn more about our work speaking, seeking and spreading the truth about tobacco, visit [truthinitiative.org](http://truthinitiative.org).

### **About The EX Program**

The EX Program is a comprehensive, digital smoking-cessation program designed for employers, health systems and health plans to offer to their employees or members who smoke. The program combines the popular quit-smoking planning tools and online community from the proven-effective smoking cessation program, EX<sup>®</sup>, and adds personalized, digital coaching and medication support from tobacco treatment specialists at the Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center and Truth Initiative. EX has helped more than 800,000 smokers over the past eight years, and 93 percent of those say they would recommend EX to a friend. Research has shown that smokers who follow the EX plan have a four times greater than average chance of quitting. To

learn how the EX Program can help your organization lower the financial and health burdens of smoking, visit [theexprogram.com](http://theexprogram.com).

### **About Mayo Clinic**

Mayo Clinic is a nonprofit organization committed to clinical practice, education and research, providing expert, whole-person care to everyone who needs healing. For more information, visit <http://www.mayoclinic.org/about-mayo-clinic> or <http://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/>.