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WASHTENAW COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT URGES RESIDENTS TO 'KICK BUTTS' DURING THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT, NOVEMBER 15

Smokers Across the Nation to Raise Awareness by Smoking Less or Quitting Smoking for One Day

YPSILANTI, Mich., November 9, 2007—Washtenaw County Health Department officials today urged tobacco users to consider smoking less or quit smoking for at least one day by participating in the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout on Thursday, November 15. The Great American Smokeout is a national campaign that began in the 1970s to raise awareness of the dangers of tobacco smoking and secondhand smoke and to make tobacco users aware of the many effective ways to quit smoking for good.

The Smokeout has helped bring about dramatic changes in Americans' attitudes about smoking, which have led to community programs and smoke-free laws that are now saving lives in many states. With the implementation of the Washtenaw County Clean Indoor Air Regulation in 2003, Washtenaw County became the second county in Michigan to pass a law that protects workers and the public from secondhand smoke. It remains as one of the strongest smoking regulations in the state of Michigan.

The latest tobacco use data from the Michigan Department of Community Health and the Washtenaw County Health Improvement Plan (HIP) indicate:

- Smoking is the most preventable cause of premature death.
- Heart disease, stroke, cancer, emphysema and pneumonia can be attributed to smoking.
- Secondhand smoke is a major contributor to respiratory problems, increased ear infections and causes 80 percent more coughing and wheezing.
- Sixty-two percent of smokers have tried to quit in the past year.
- Statewide, 22 percent of residents smoke (compared to 21% of Americans nationwide).

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- Countywide, 16% of county residents are smokers (although some areas report a disproportionately higher smoking rate, such as Ypsilanti, where 32% of residents smoke).
- Smoking-attributable healthcare costs in Michigan equal \$3.40 billion.
- The Medicaid portion of smoking-attributable healthcare costs equal \$1.13 billion.
- Michigan residents' tax burden for smoking-attributable healthcare costs equal \$637 per household.
- Smoking-attributable productivity losses in Michigan equal \$3.80 billion.
- Smoking-attributable healthcare costs and productivity losses per pack of cigarettes sold in Michigan equal \$10.44.

“If anyone has been thinking about quitting, the Great American Smokeout provides the perfect opportunity to get started,” said DeBorah Borden, Coordinator of the Washtenaw County Tobacco Reduction Coalition. “There are many ‘quit programs’ available to assist smokers and they should be aware that their insurance plans, including Medicaid or Medicare, may pay for these programs or even the medications that could help,” she said. “Call your insurance plan to see if your plan has cessation coverage. If not, there are also free or low-cost smoking cessation resources available to help.”

Borden said that individuals who attempt to quit smoking are more successful if they use a combination of methods, such as nicotine replacement therapies, smoking cessation classes, self-help materials and a strong support network of family and friends. Other indicators that affect the level of smoking rates and the ability to quit include income and education. “This is why awareness about tobacco use and the health benefits of quitting is so important and a continuous process,” Borden said.

Resources for Tobacco Users

- **Michigan Tobacco Quitline:** 1-800-480-QUIT (7848)
A free service to help people who are ready to quit.
- **Free Michigan Quit Kits:** 1-800-537-5666 (www.healthymichigan.com)
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** www.cdc.gov/tobacco: Get ‘quit tobacco’ materials and information.
- **Reality Check** (www.myrealitycheck.org): A tobacco prevention educational website that is designed to educate youth on the dangers of tobacco use.
- **American Lung Association of Michigan** (www.ALAM.org): Includes “Freedom from Smoking,” an on-line smoking cessation program.
- **American Cancer Society** (www.cancer.org): 1-800-227-2345 for free materials, quit kits and referrals.
- **American Heart Association** (www.americanheart.org): 1-800-242-8721 for free materials.
- **Boston University On-line Smoking Cessation Website** (www.quitnet.com): Keeps track of how much lifetime and money you are saving by quitting.
- **Nicotine Anonymous** (www.nicotine-anonymous.org): Information, support, literature and referrals.

The Washtenaw County Tobacco Reduction Coalition provides education through collaborative activities designed to reduce tobacco use as well as support tobacco legislation. For more information about tobacco-related information and smoking cessation resources, visit the Washtenaw County Tobacco Reduction Coalition website at public.health@ewashtenaw.org or contact DeBorah Borden at (734) 544-6874 or bordend@ewashtenaw.org.

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