



555 Towner St., P.O. Box 0915  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197-0915  
Phone: (734) 544-6700

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Date: November 6, 2008  
Contact: **DeBorah Borden**, Tobacco Service Coordinator, Washtenaw County Public Health Department  
E-mail: [bordend@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:bordend@ewashtenaw.org)  
Phone: (734) 544-6874

**ACCEPT THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT CHALLENGE, November 20, 2008**  
**Quitting Smoking is not Easy, but it Can be Done**

YPSILANTI, Mich., November 6, 2008---The Washtenaw County Public Health Department today urged tobacco users to participate in the Great American SmokeOut on Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup>. This annual national event offers smokers a whole day to begin the journey to becoming smoke free. It also provides an opportunity to increase awareness of the health hazards associated with tobacco use and educate people on effective ways to reduce or eliminate tobacco use dependency.

This year the Great American SmokeOut will serve two purposes: (1) a day of encouragement for smokers to quit and (2) to celebrate the progress Washtenaw County has made in reducing smoking rates. "According to the most current data from our Washtenaw County Health Improvement Plan (HIP) health behavior risk factor survey, the prevalence of adult smokers in Washtenaw County was in 16% in 2005, which is 6% lower than Michigan's overall smoking rate of 22%. This is a very important achievement for our county," said Ellen Clement, Washtenaw County Public Health Officer.

In 2003, Washtenaw County implemented a Clean Indoor Air regulation which prohibits smoking in public and private worksites and public places. HIP survey data reveals that in 1995, smokers made up 23% of the county. By 2005, the smoking rate had dropped to 16%. One of the HIP's 52 health improvement objectives for the county is to see that rate drop even more – to 5% by the year 2020. By combining strategies including policies that reduce use and access with individual assistance to quit, that long-term goal can become a reality for our county.

Tobacco use is the most preventable cause of early death and disease including heart disease, stroke, cancer, emphysema, and pneumonia. Second-hand smoke is also a major threat to one's health and can cause cancer, respiratory problems, increased ear infections and 80% more coughing and wheezing in children.

"The decision to quit smoking can be a difficult one but with all the resources available to help smokers quit, there has never been a better time to quit smoking. There are a variety of smoking cessation and support programs to accommodate all types of personalities," said DeBorah Borden, Coordinator of the Washtenaw County Tobacco Reduction Coalition. "Such programs include self-help materials, on-line therapy, group therapy, buddy networks, and strong support of family and friends. For a positive result, select a program that best fits your personality and daily schedule," she said. "The Great American SmokeOut is also a great time to show your support for the Campaign to Make Michigan Air Smoke Free."

Some insurance plans pay for smoking cessation programs and medications to assist you in quitting smoking. There are also free or low cost smoking cessation resources available. Call your insurance provider to see if they offer smoking cessation coverage.

Resources for tobacco users:

- Michigan Tobacco Quitline: 1-800-480-QUIT (7848)
- Boston University On-line Smoking Cessation Website or [WWW.quitnet.com](http://WWW.quitnet.com)
- [www.gottaquit.com](http://www.gottaquit.com)
- Nicotine Anonymous ([www.nicotine-anonymous.org](http://www.nicotine-anonymous.org))
- American Lung Association of Michigan ([www.alam.org](http://www.alam.org))
- American Cancer Society ([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org))
- American Heart Association ([www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org))
- [www.michigan.gov/dmdch](http://www.michigan.gov/dmdch)
- [www.tobaccotreatmenttraining.com](http://www.tobaccotreatmenttraining.com)

###