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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Michigan Goes Smoke Free on May 1st

Ypsilanti, MI – Washtenaw County Public Health Department in collaboration with the Michigan Department of Community Health kicks off a Public Education Campaign to raise awareness about Michigan’s new smoke free law covering bars, restaurants, hotels, and private clubs with food license. The smoke free law, named after the late chief medical officer Ron M. Davis of the Department of Health, goes into effect on May 1, 2010. As part of the campaign, the Washtenaw County Public Health Department is available to provide presentations to any community group and/or business interested in the specifics of the law during the month of April. Information about the new law is available on the county website at: <http://www.ewashtenaw.org/publichealth>.

“We are very pleased the State finally passed this law” says Dick Fleece Washtenaw County Health Officer. Washtenaw County enacted the Washtenaw County Clean Indoor Air Regulation in 2003 but bars and restaurants were preempted by State law. The County regulation prohibits smoking in all other public and private worksites and public places in Washtenaw County. According to the 2005 Health Improvement Plan Survey, the smoking rate among county residents has dropped from 25% to 16%. Much of that gain can be attributed to the County regulation. This compares to national rates that estimates 45 million people (21%) in the United States currently smoke.

The Michigan Department of Community Health has developed a website, www.michigan.gov/smokefreelaw that communicates details of the law. The website includes information for businesses on how to comply with the law, affidavits for businesses wanting to apply for the Cigar Bar and Tobacco Specialty Shops exemptions and a Frequently Asked Questions document that answers the most commonly asked questions regarding the law. In addition, a new television public service announcement (PSA) titled, “Smoked Lasagna” will run in partnership with the Michigan Association of Broadcasters, and the PSA can also be found on the state website.

The Washtenaw County Public Health Department is available to answer questions related to the new law. Kristen Schweighoefer, Environmental Health Supervisor, states that “Although 71% of Washtenaw County food service establishments are already smoke-free, we understand that this will be a major change for many businesses. We will work with food establishment operators to help them understand and comply with the provisions of the law”.

The new law does allow exemptions for the gaming floors of the three Detroit casinos, but the casino bars, restaurants and hotels must be smoke free. Michigan’s 20 American-Indian casinos are not covered by the state law. Cigar bars, tobacco specialty shops, home offices, commercial trucks and motor vehicles are also exempt. Individual and business owners

who violate the law will be subject to penalties of \$100.00 for the first offense and \$500.00 for subsequent offenses. Businesses that are planning to file for the tobacco specialty shop and cigar bar exemptions are encouraged to go to the website, www.michigan.gov/smokefreelaw. To request the Michigan's New Smoke Free law presentation for your group or business, call DeBorah Borden at 544-6874.

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