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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 1, 2011

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CLEARING THE AIR

Local and State Experts Discuss How Smoke-Free Housing Policies Benefit Tenants and Property Owners Alike

YPSILANTI, Mich., March 1, 2011 – Washtenaw County Public Health and the Tobacco Reduction Coalition present “Clearing the Air: What You Need to Know about Smoke-Free Housing & Medical Marijuana,” Thursday, March 10 from noon to 2 pm at the Learning Resource Center, 4135 Washtenaw, Ann Arbor. Local and state experts will discuss the legalities and benefits of smoke-free properties. Tenants and property owners will gain a better understanding of their rights as well as the health and economic benefits associated with smoke-free properties. Medical marijuana, as it relates to smoke-free housing, will also be discussed. The workshop is free, and lunch is provided. Please call 734-544-6874 to register.

“The home is a primary source of exposure to secondhand smoke,” says Diana Torres-Burgos, MD, MPH, Medical Director for Washtenaw County Public Health. “When it is involuntary, as it is for many non-smoking tenants in rental housing, it’s a big concern. Advocating for smoke-free housing has become a priority across the state of Michigan.” Non-smokers who live with secondhand tobacco smoke are more likely to have serious illnesses like cancer and heart disease, and children are more susceptible to ear infections and asthma, she continued.

The majority of Michigan residents (80%) do not smoke, and 70% of Michigan households do not allow smoking in their homes. Unfortunately, unwanted secondhand smoke is a daily reality for many tenants in rental properties or other multi-unit dwellings. Additionally, the financial burden of smoking tenants can be significant for property owners, who must maintain or rehab units or homes after smokers live in them.

Other benefits of smoke-free housing policies include:

- Filling an increasing demand for smoke-free housing in the local market
- Eliminating involuntary exposure to secondhand smoke in multi-unit dwellings
- Protecting and promoting health, especially for children and the elderly
- Reducing the risk of fires and associated liability or injury

The [Tobacco Reduction Coalition](#) promotes healthier lifestyles through the reduction of tobacco use and the promotion of tobacco-free lifestyles. The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) provides funding to support the coalition. For more information or to register for the [free workshop](#), contact DeBorah Borden at bordend@ewashtenaw.org or (734) 544-6874.

Washtenaw County Public Health promotes health and works to prevent disease or injury in our community. Visit us online at <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>.

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