

For Immediate Release

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World No Tobacco Day 2018 *Choose health, not tobacco*

YPSILANTI, Mich., May 24, 2018 – Each year on May 31, The World Health Organization (WHO) and its partners mark World No Tobacco Day, highlighting the health risks associated with tobacco use and advocating for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption.

The [Washtenaw County Health Department](#) is joining these efforts by raising awareness of the health harms caused by tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure and encouraging residents to take advantage of the Michigan Tobacco Quitline's (1-800-QUIT-NOW) free help. From now until May 31, all new callers 18 and over can also get a free two-week supply of nicotine replacement therapy.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Michigan — killing more than 16,200 Michigan residents each year. 5,200 Michigan youth become new regular, daily smokers each year, and more than one third of these children will die prematurely as a result.

According to the most recent [Health Improvement Plan Survey](#), adult smoking rates in Washtenaw County have gone in the wrong direction from 12% to 15%. In addition, disparities exist. Nearly 40% of adults with Medicaid identify as current smokers, compared with only 12% who have commercial insurance. Also, 26% of African-Americans smoke, compared with 14% white and 6% Asian survey respondents (HIP Survey, 2015).

“Ninety-five percent of adult smokers began smoking before the age of 21,” says Jimena Loveluck, MSW, deputy health officer with Washtenaw County Health Department. “It’s critical that Michigan invest in sustained tobacco prevention and control programming and implement evidence-based tobacco control strategies to protect our kids from a lifetime of addiction to a deadly product.”

Michigan spends just \$1.63 million on tobacco prevention and control programming, while tobacco use costs the state nearly \$4.6 billion in health care costs, including nearly \$1.4 billion in Medicaid costs. The tobacco industry spends an estimated \$295 million annually to market their products in Michigan. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that Michigan spend \$110 million on tobacco prevention and control programming.

Fully funding tobacco prevention and control programming at the level recommended by the CDC and raising the price of cigarettes and other tobacco products are proven, effective ways to reduce tobacco use rates and to prevent kids from starting to use tobacco. Spending a portion of the revenue generated from a price increase on tobacco prevention and control programming increases the positive impact. In addition, Michigan does not spend any of the funds received from the Master Settlement Agreement on tobacco prevention and control programming. Spending even a fraction of

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these funds on programs to prevent young people from starting to use tobacco and to help people to quit smoking, would help to reduce the death and disease caused by tobacco use, and would reduce healthcare costs.

The Washtenaw County Health Department wants people to know that there is help available to residents who want to quit using tobacco through the Michigan Tobacco Quitline. Individual tobacco users can contact the Quitline directly at 1-800-QUIT-NOW, or enroll online at michigan.quitlogix.org/. The Quitline is an evidenced-based service that helps smokers access quit aids, counseling and other resources. People of any age can get free telephone counseling, text messaging support and online resources.

For more information, please contact Kim Collom, MS, at 734-544-2986 or collomk@washtenaw.org. Providers in all health care settings are also encouraged to refer their patients and clients to the Quitline. Additional information, including a fax referral form for providers, is available on the [website](#).

Washtenaw County Health Department

Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs. Visit the Washtenaw County Health Department online at www.washtenaw.org/health or call (734) 544-6700.

For more information on the Health Improvement Plan Survey, visit www.washtenaw.org/HIP.

To learn more about World No Tobacco Day, visit www.who.int/tobacco/wntd/en/.

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