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For Immediate Release

Branch County Celebrates Great American Smokeout November 20, 2014

The American Cancer Society marks the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November each year by encouraging smokers to use the date to make a plan to quit, or to plan in advance and quit smoking that day. By doing so, smokers will be taking an important step towards a healthier life – one that can lead to reducing cancer risk. This year's Great American Smokeout will be held on Thursday November 20th.

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in Michigan, killing more than 14,400 residents each year, yet many Michiganders still use tobacco. 21.4% of Michigan adults, and 11.8% of Michigan youth smoke cigarettes. However, among current U.S. adult cigarette smokers, nearly 70% report that they want to quit completely. Because tobacco products are highly addictive, most users make several quit attempts before they are successful.

"The Great American Smokeout is an opportunity to remind tobacco users that there are resources available to help them quit, and to support tobacco users in their efforts to quit," stated Kelley Mapes, Community Health Educator. "Quitting tobacco use is the best thing you can do for your health. Within minutes to hours after quitting blood pressure, heart rate, and carbon monoxide levels decrease, and the long term benefits continue over time including improved lung function and decreased risk of cancer and heart disease."

To celebrate the Great American Smokeout, The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency offers numerous resources to help you quit smoking or quit using tobacco products.

Research shows that while quitting is difficult for most tobacco users, people who use tobacco can increase their success in quitting with help. Quitters are most successful when using a combination of therapies, including resources such as nicotine replacement, counseling, self-help materials, and a strong support network of family and friends.

Resources available to Michigan residents include:

- The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) Tobacco Quitline, 1-(800) 784-8669, continues to provide free telephone coaching for the uninsured, pregnant women, and those with Medicaid and Medicare, and free nicotine

replacement medications for those who qualify. Information on quitting smoking and a free printable Michigan Smoker's Quit Kit are available through MDCH by visiting: www.michigan.gov/tobacco .

- BecomeAnEX.org is a free, interactive website that shows smokers how to re-learn life without cigarettes. The site, developed by Legacy in partnership with Mayo Clinic, offers a free, personalized quit plan and an online support community to help people prepare to quit and stay quit.
- The American Cancer Society has tools available to help with quitting. For more information contact the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345.

For more information about the Great American Smokeout, contact The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency at 517-279-9561. The toll-free telephone number for the American Cancer Society is 1-800-227-2345. Information also is available on the American Cancer Society's Web site at www.cancer.org.

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