

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

December 22, 2015

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Free Quitline Services Available for the Holidays

Coldwater, MI. Giving yourself the gift of health just got more affordable if you are a current smoker. This year, the Michigan Tobacco Quitline is making it easier for Michigan residents to quit tobacco by offering free telephone coaching and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) to all Michigan residents, regardless of insurance status. This free offer is currently underway and is running through December 31, 2015.

While the Michigan Tobacco Quitline is available to all Michiganders and always provides services, such as materials, text messaging, an online program, and referral to all callers, the telephone coaching and free NRT are not. These two services are usually available only to:

- Uninsured clients,
- Pregnant women,
- Medicaid and Medicare enrollees,
- Veterans,
- Cancer patients, and
- American Indians.

However, with the free coaching and NRT promotion, all Michigan residents can get a jump on their New Year's resolutions, and make sure they start out the New Year right! The Quitline is available at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

"Quitting tobacco can be challenging because nicotine is a highly addictive drug. This promotion by the Quitline can help Michigan residents take the first step in improving their health" states Kelley Mapes, Health Educator for the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency and regional tobacco liaison.

According to the American Cancer Society, the benefits of quitting smoking are immediate. Within 20 minutes blood pressure drops, and within 24 hours a person's chance of heart attack

decreases. The benefits continue for years, including reduced risk of lung cancer, stroke, and heart disease.

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.

"The holidays can be a stressful time, but smoking doesn't have to be a part of them," adds Mapes. "Calling the Michigan Tobacco Quitline now can get help during the holidays, and make sure that 2016 is tobacco-free. Quitting tobacco today will lead to a lifetime of health benefits."

For more information, check out the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency's website at www.bhsj.org and click on Health Education link to find our Tobacco Coalition page and listed resources or you can call the Michigan Tobacco Quitline directly at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

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