

## Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### Smoking Cessation Lunch and Learn for Moms

**Coldwater, MI.** Being pregnant doesn't magically make quitting smoking easier. Even if women quit smoking when they're pregnant, the stress of parenting can lead some women to go back to smoking after they quit. But being smoke-free is possible and the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is here to help. On **Monday, July 18th at noon**, the health department is sponsoring a Lunch and Learn for a new cessation program called "*Tobacco-free – Baby & Me!*" The one-hour program features lunch and an incentive, and will be held at the Three Rivers Office, 1110 Hills Street, Three Rivers, Michigan. Call 269-273-2161, ext. 0103# to reserve your space.

If you are pregnant, post-partum, breastfeeding or a mom of small children, you are invited to spend one hour to learn how to get ready to kick the habit. Kelley Mapes, Health Educator for the tri-county health department states "Lunch is on us, and we will even provide a \$10 gift card incentive to the first 20 people who sign up." "*Tobacco-Free – Baby & Me!*" seeks to inspire, motivate and support moms who desire to be tobacco-free. Kelley adds "Through this one session, moms will receive information that can help them make a decision to be tobacco-free. Then, when they are ready to quit, they will be more successful." The program also offers other information that can help moms and children live a healthier lifestyle.

According to Rebecca Burns, Health Officer for the tri-county health department "Tobacco use continues to be the most preventable cause of death in the nation. Tobacco use in St. Joseph County has been linked to the county's high infant mortality rate. Of course, it is also connected to the occurrence of asthma and other respiratory problems in children." St. Joseph County ranked 66th out of 83 counties for its infant

mortality rate (2010-2014). In addition, 28% of births born in 2014 were to mothers who smoked during their pregnancy. Rebecca states “We can do better – and by offering new and innovative programs like this one, we will.” Funding for this program is provided by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, through its 2016 Health Innovations Grants.

To learn more about how the health department programs can help you and your family stay healthy and well, visit our website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org) or like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/bhsjwic](http://www.facebook.com/bhsjwic).

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