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"Your Local
Health Department"

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Holiday Season is a Great Time to Quit Tobacco

Coldwater, MI. The holiday season has arrived, and the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency wants to remind you that there is no better time for people to adopt a healthy, tobacco-free lifestyle.

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.

"Quitting tobacco can be challenging because nicotine is a highly addictive drug. But whether a person chooses to quit during the holiday season, or as a New Year's resolution, there are resources available to help," stated Kelley Mapes, Health Educator for the tri-county health department.

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 Michigan Tobacco Quitline is an evidence-based service that continues to provide free telephone coaching for the uninsured, pregnant women, residents enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare, veterans, cancer patients, and American Indians, and free nicotine replacement therapy to those who qualify. The Quitline provides services including materials, text messaging, an online program, and referral to all Michigan residents.

Providers can refer their patients and clients to the Quitline, and individual tobacco users can contact the Quitline directly at 1-800-784-8669, or enroll online at <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/>. The health department also provides training assistance to provider offices and their staff members on how to make referrals and how to screen clients so as to assess their readiness to quit. Providers who would like more information and would like to receive the fax referral form for providers, can visit the website. Or providers can call the health department and schedule a short in-service training for their staff. Contact Health Education at 517-279-9561, ext. 0103#. Staff and providers in all health care settings can refer patients and clients to the Michigan Tobacco Quitline.

In addition to these resources, the health department also recommends the National Cancer Institute website which offers free resources and advice on how to make a quit plan that can help a tobacco user stop using. These resources are available at www.smokefree.gov.

"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 help people make the holidays, and 2017, tobacco-free. Quitting tobacco today will lead to a lifetime of health benefits."

For more information about tobacco cessation efforts, please contact the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency or visit our website at www.bhsj.org and click on the Health Education tab at the top. Or you can call the Michigan Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

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