



"Your Local
Health Department"

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is Celebrating Great American Smokeout in November

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is recognizing the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout which has been celebrated annually on the third Thursday in November since 1976. During this time, health officials are encouraging tobacco users to quit for a 24-hour period with the goal of making it a first step toward a tobacco free lifestyle.

The first Great American occurred on November 18, 1976, when the California Division of the American Cancer Society got nearly one million smokers to quit for the day. The Society took the program nationwide in 1977. The Smokeout has helped dramatically change Americans' attitudes about smoking, helping bring about community programs and smoke-free laws that are now saving lives in many states. Many public places and work areas are now smoke-free, protecting non-smokers and encouraging smokers to quit. Today, smokers have more tools than ever to help quit smoking. But as many former smokers know well, it often takes several committed quit attempts, using any of several tools before a method works for them.

Quitting even for one day can be an important step in creating a tobacco-free life, but even that is not easy. "A smoker's first cigarette might seem like a choice, but very soon, it becomes an addiction

that shortens the lives of half of its victims,” said Cliff Douglas, vice president for tobacco control. “Most smokers start before age 18, and many even before they become teenagers, so usually that ‘choice’ was made by kids long before they were of age to make a rational, thoughtful decision about whether to use a highly addictive product. And of course, they were aggressively targeted by the tobacco industry.”

Nearly seven out of ten smokers (68%) say they want to quit. In any year, about four in ten (42%) try. But very few, somewhere between 4% and 7%, succeed on their own on any given attempt. Studies show that with the aid of medications, as many as 25% of smokers can stay smoke-free for over 6 months, and that combining medication use with counseling increases success.

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in Michigan, killing more than 16,200 residents each year, yet many Michiganders still use tobacco. 21.2% of Michigan adults, and 11.8% of Michigan youth smoke cigarettes. Because tobacco products are highly addictive, most users make several quit attempts before they are successful. However, in the United States there are now more former smokers than there are current smokers, and more than half of all ever smokers have quit smoking.

Throughout the year, the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency works to reduce the number of smokers and the exposure of secondhand smoke by offering smoking cessation counseling, participating in coalitions, celebrating national observances like the “Great American Smokeout,” and working with communities on smoke-free policies.

“The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is always working to guard and protect against threats and illness caused by exposure to cigarette smoke, because saving lives saves dollars,” said Kelley Mapes, TTS Community Health Educator for the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency.

Below is a timeline highlighting some of the many immediate and longer-term benefits of quitting:

- 20 minutes: Your heart rate and blood pressure drop.
- 12 hours: The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

- 2 weeks to 3 months: circulation improves and lung function increases.
- 1 to 9 months: Coughing and shortness of breath decrease; cilia start to regain normal function in the lungs, increasing the ability to clean the lungs and reduce infection.
- 1 year: The excess risk of coronary heart disease is reduced by half
- 5 years: Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder are cut in half. Stroke risk can fall to that of a non-smoker after 2-5 years.
- 10 years: The risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a person who is still smoking. The risk of cancer of the larynx (voice box) and pancreas decreases.
- 15 years: The risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker's.

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/> . Additional information, including a fax referral form for providers, is available at the website. Staff and providers in all health care settings can refer patients and clients to the Michigan Tobacco Quitline.

For more information about the Michigan Tobacco Quitline visit <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/> , or contact Kelley Mapes, at mapesk@bhsj.org. For more information about the Great American Smokeout the American Cancer Society's Web site at www.cancer.org/smokeout. Be sure to also like our Facebook page at www.bhsj.org/bhsjwic/