



"Your Local
Health Department"

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency Celebrates the Great American Smokeout on November 17, 2016

Coldwater, MI. The American Cancer Society marks the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November each year by encouraging smokers to go the distance and quit smoking for good. 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 observed on **Thursday November 17th**.

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in Michigan, killing more than 16,200 residents each year. Nearly 30% of all cancer deaths in Michigan are directly attributed to smoking. Yet, many Michiganders still use tobacco. In Branch, Hillsdale and St. Joseph Counties, 22.9% of adults and more than 8% of its high school youth smoke cigarettes.

Because tobacco products are highly addictive, most users make several quit attempts before they are successful. However, there are proven resources available to help tobacco users quit. 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 Great American Smokeout is an opportunity to remind tobacco users that they can be successful, and to support tobacco users in their efforts to quit," stated Rebecca Burns, Health Officer for the tri-county health department. "Quitting tobacco use is the single best thing you can do for your health. The positive effects on health are both short and long term, and quitting benefits everyone, regardless of age."

To celebrate the Great American Smokeout, the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is encouraging health care providers to ask their patients about tobacco use at every visit, provide advice to tobacco users about the benefits of quitting, and refer clients to the Michigan Tobacco Quitline (1-800-784-8669).

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. The health department also provides **free training** for medical office staff and other health and human service providers on how to assist their clients in becoming smoke-free. Contact Health Education to schedule a training session by calling 517-279-9561, ext. 0103#

For more information about the Michigan Tobacco Quitline, visit <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/>. For more information about the Great American Smokeout, visit the American Cancer Society's Web site at www.cancer.org. To learn more about the health department's tobacco reduction efforts, visit our website at www.bhsj.org and click on the Health Promotion and Education tab.

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