



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

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"Your Local  
Health Department"

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **National Public Health Week 2018**

**Coldwater, MI.** During the first full week of April each year, the American Public Health Association brings together communities across the United States to observe National Public Health Week. In 2018, this event will be held April 2 – 8. The week is a time to recognize the contributions of public health, and highlight issues that are important to improving the public's health.

In 2018, National Public Health Week kicks off by highlighting behavioral health, and focusing on advocating for improved access to mental and behavioral health services. People experiencing mental and behavioral health issues smoke cigarettes at a much higher rate than the general population, but are less likely to quit than the general population. Approximately 25% of adults in the U.S. have some form of mental illness or substance use disorder, and these adults consume almost 40% of all cigarettes smoked by adults. People with mental illness or substance use disorders die approximately 5 years earlier than those without these disorders, and many of these deaths are caused by smoking cigarettes.

Although people with mental illness are less likely to stop smoking than those without mental illness, many smokers with mental illness want to quit. There are evidence-based methods for helping tobacco users, including those with mental illness or substance use disorders, quit. In addition, there are strategies that providers can implement to help those experiencing

behavioral health issues to quit using tobacco. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the following strategies may be effective:

- Mental health facilities should consider going smoke-free, including prohibiting tobacco use among employees or encouraging staff to quit.
- Counselors should ask clients who smoke cigarettes or use other tobacco products about their interest in quitting while in substance abuse treatment.
- The practice of providing mental health patients with cigarettes as an incentive or reward should be discontinued. Additionally, staff should not be allowed to smoke cigarettes with patients.
- Extra help to succeed in quitting should be offered to patients who smoke cigarettes. This can include more counseling, combining stop-smoking medicines or using them longer, and follow-up to care (e.g., telephone calls by a counselor, extended counseling, or continued medications).

In addition, for individuals interested in quitting smoking, there are resources available to help. 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. Tobacco users can call the Quitline at 1-800-784-8669. To learn more about resources available for those interested in quitting smoking, check out our website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org) and press the Quick Info About Health Topics button. Also, be sure to like our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/bhsj/wic/](http://www.facebook.com/bhsj/wic/).

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