

NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Celebrate July 4th Tobacco-Free

Each year July 4th marks Independence Day, a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. In honor of Independence Day, The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency encourages tobacco users to seek help with quitting tobacco, and begin a tobacco-free life.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Michigan—killing more than 16,200 Michigan residents each year. 5,200 Michigan youth become new regular, daily smokers each year, and more than 1/3 of these children will die prematurely as a result.

Tobacco use causes premature death and disease including heart disease, stroke, cancer, and respiratory disease. However, it is never too late to quit using tobacco, and quitting results in immediate and long-term health benefits.

Because tobacco products are highly addictive, most tobacco 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.

“Help is available and we encourage people to celebrate July 4th by declaring their freedom from tobacco use or encouraging the tobacco users in their life to quit. Talk to your health care provider or call the Michigan Tobacco Quitline today,” stated Kelley Mapes, Community Health Educator.

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. The Quitline provides services including materials, text messaging, an online program, and referral to all Michigan residents. Individuals can call the Quitline directly at 1-800-784-8669, or enroll online at <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/>.

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Educator noted that July 4th is also a great day to talk to young people about the importance of leading a life free from nicotine addiction and tobacco use. “In addition to traditional cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other new tobacco products are attractive to kids. It’s important to remind young people that these products are not safe,” stated Kelley Mapes, Community Health Educator. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nicotine is highly addictive and can harm brain development, which continues until about age 25, and the use of any tobacco product, including e-cigarettes, is unsafe for young people.

The tobacco industry spends an estimated \$320 million to market their products in Michigan annually, and cigarette smoking costs Michigan over \$4.5 billion in health care costs each year. However, Michigan spends just \$1.625 million on tobacco prevention and control programming. The CDC recommends that Michigan invest \$110 million. The U.S. Surgeon General concluded that part of what works to prevent smoking initiation and promote quitting includes funding statewide tobacco control programs at CDC-recommended levels.

For more information, please contact our website at www.bhsj.org or contact our Community Health Educator, Kelley Mapes at 517-279-9561, ext. 103. For help with quitting tobacco use, talk with your healthcare provider or contact the Michigan Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-784-8669.

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