



"Your Local
Health Department"

Branch - Hillsdale - St. Joseph Community Health Agency

570 N. Marshall Road
Coldwater, MI 49036
(517) 279-9561
Fax (517) 278-2923

20 Care Drive
Hillsdale, MI 49242
(517) 437-7395
Fax (517) 437-0166

1110 Hill Street
Three Rivers, MI 49093
(269) 273-2161
Fax (269) 273-2452

www.bhsj.org

August 31, 2018

Rebecca Burns, Health Officer
517-279-9561, ext. 0148#

Kelley Mapes, Community Health Educator
517-279-9561, ext. 0103#

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tobacco Usage Rates High in Michigan High School Students

Coldwater, MI. . Tobacco usage rates for Michigan high school students are higher than the national average. 10.5% of Michigan high school students currently smoke cigarettes, and 14.8% use e-cigarettes. According to the 2017-18 Michigan Profile for Health Youth survey data in Branch, Hillsdale and St Joseph Counties, the percent of high school students who currently smoke cigarettes is 6.5% but when looking at the number who use e-cigarettes, the percent more than triples at 25%. Each year 5,200 Michigan kids under age 18 become new, daily smokers. 213,000 kids under 18 and alive in Michigan today ultimately die prematurely from smoking.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, the use of products containing nicotine in any form, including e-cigarettes, is unsafe for youth. The brain is not fully developed until the early to mid-20s. Exposure to nicotine during periods of significant brain development, including adolescence, can disrupt the growth of brain circuits that control attention, learning, and susceptibility to addiction. Effects can be long-lasting and can include lower impulse control and mood disorders.

"Although we have made significant progress in protecting our youth from tobacco-related health harms, we still have a long way to go," stated Kelley Mapes, Health Educator for the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency. "Far too many of our children are still using tobacco and are being exposed to the health harms caused by secondhand smoke. It is essential that we address e-cigarette use among young people, and do everything we can to prevent youth tobacco use, which can lead to a lifetime of addiction to a deadly product." Many Students involved in The Youth Engaged in Prevention programs do their part each year to prevent youth tobacco use by educating and engaging their peers and community in various events such as Kick Butts and The Great American Smokeout."

Michigan spends \$4.59 billion annually on health care costs directly caused by smoking, including \$1.36 billion in state Medicaid costs. The tobacco industry spends an estimated \$320 million to market their products in Michigan each year. In contrast, Michigan spends only \$1.63 million on tobacco prevention and control programming. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, the more young people are exposed to cigarette advertising and

promotional activities, the more likely they are to smoke, and 80% of underage smokers choose brands from among the top three most heavily advertised.

As students head back to school, Kelley Mapes, Health Educator of the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency encourages parents and health care providers to talk to kids about tobacco use and to remind kids that spit tobacco and e-cigarettes are not a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes. Providing a tobacco-free example and home environment can also help to protect kids from tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure.

For young people who have already begun to use tobacco and want to quit, the Michigan Tobacco Quitline provides services for Michigan youth of any age. Young people can call the Quitline at 1-800-784-8669 or 1-800-QUIT-NOW and receive free telephone counseling to help them quit tobacco. In addition, the Quitline offers a free text messaging program and a self-guided online program to help youth quit tobacco. The Smokefree Teen website available at <http://teen.smokefree.gov/> provides tools to help young people quit. Please like the Hillsdale County Youth Engaged in Prevention Facebook page and feel free to use the resources that are shared with the group.

For more information, please check 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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