

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### *Great American Smokeout*

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Contact: Rhonda Rudolph, Jackson Tobacco Reduction Coalition Coordinator

Phone Number: (517) 768-2131

Email Address: [rrudolph@co.jackson.mi.us](mailto:rrudolph@co.jackson.mi.us)

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**JACKSON COUNTY, MI** – The Jackson County Health Department is celebrating the Great American Smokeout by encouraging residents across the county to put down their tobacco products for 24 hours and prepare to start a lifetime free of nicotine addiction.

The American Cancer Society marks the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November each year by encouraging smokers to quit that day or to develop a plan to quit smoking. By doing so, smokers will be taking an important step towards a healthier life. This year's Great American Smokeout will be observed on Thursday November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in Michigan, killing more than 16,200 residents each year. 20.4% of Michigan adults smoke cigarettes, 10.5% of Michigan high school students smoke cigarettes, and another 14.8% of these kids use e-cigarettes. Each year, 4,400 Michigan kids become new, daily smokers. Thirty percent (30%) of cancer deaths in Michigan are attributable to cigarette smoking. Increasing the legal age of purchase for tobacco products to 21 would decrease the number of young people exposed to tobacco and result in less addictions and premature deaths due to the reduction of tobacco use. For more information on Tobacco 21 facts visit [www.tobacco21.org](http://www.tobacco21.org). In addition, young people are using electronic cigarettes and becoming addicted to the nicotine which can lead them back to tobacco product use and early disease and death.

Tobacco products are highly addictive. Therefore, 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 succeed, and to support tobacco users in their efforts to quit,” stated Rhonda Rudolph, Jackson Tobacco

Reduction Coalition Coordinator. “This year, the American Cancer Society reminds tobacco users that you don’t have to quit in one day. Start with day one.”

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. According to the American Cancer Society, the body begins to recover within minutes of quitting smoking. Heart rate and blood pressure drops, and within 12 hours carbon monoxide levels in blood return to normal. Benefits continue over time, including improved circulation and lung function, reduced risk of coronary heart disease and cancer.

To celebrate the Great American Smokeout, Richard Thoune, Jackson County Health Officer 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). In addition, Mr. Thoune encourages policymakers to adopt evidence-based policies that help current tobacco users quit, and prevent kids from starting to smoke. Comprehensive 24/7 tobacco-free school policies, raising the price of tobacco, raising the minimum legal age of sale of tobacco products to 21 years of age, and funding tobacco prevention and control programming at levels recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are proven, effective methods for reducing the health and economic burden of tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure.

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, and referral to all Michigan residents. New this year is an online, interactive coaching program option. The same program that is available on the phone can now be done online with the Quitline’s specially trained web coaches.

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 Rhonda Rudolph, Jackson Tobacco Reduction Coalition Coordinator at [rrudolph@co.jackson.mi.us](mailto:rrudolph@co.jackson.mi.us) .

For resources and information about the Great American Smokeout, visit the American Cancer Society's Web site at <https://www.cancer.org/content/cancer/en/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/great-american-smokeout.html>.