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DATE: February 14, 2017

END DATE: February 28, 2017

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RE: **Tobacco 21**

The Genesee County Health Department is pleased to announce that the proposed Tobacco 21 regulation was passed February 14, 2017, by the Genesee County Board of Commissioners. Tobacco related deaths account for more than 16,000 deaths every year in Michigan. Adolescents are more sensitive to nicotine and can become addicted easier because their brains are not fully developed until the age of twenty-five. Ninety-five percent of adults started using tobacco products before the age of twenty-one. Adolescents are more likely to obtain tobacco products from other adolescents. Eliminating the sale of tobacco products to people under age twenty-one can prevent them from trying tobacco products. According to the Institute of Medicine (IOM), delaying the initiation of tobacco use by adolescents and young adults will “immediately improve the health of adolescents and young adults, improve maternal, fetal and infant health outcomes and substantially reduce smoking prevalence and smoking-related mortality over time.” It is predicted by the IOM that raising the minimum legal sales age of tobacco products to twenty-one would result in approximately 249,000 fewer premature deaths and 45,000 fewer deaths from lung cancer.

The regulation will become effective May 15, 2017. Retailers will be provided new signs stating that the new minimum legal sales age of tobacco products has been raised to twenty-one. The Tobacco 21 regulation will not punish young adults under the age of twenty-one for tobacco possession. Penalties will be given to retailers who do not comply with the regulation.

For questions, please call the Genesee County Health Department at 810-257-3194.

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