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RE: Get Ready for the Great American Smokeout

For twenty-nine years, the Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) has aggressively supported the tobacco prevention goals of The American Cancer Society, who will kick off its annual Great American Smokeout on Thursday, November 17, 2016. "Throughout the year, our staff provides community education, resources, and conducts presentations on the Michigan Tobacco Quitline and the Clinical Practice Guidelines for Reducing Tobacco Use," stated Genesee County Health Department Health Officer, Mark Valacak.

Over the past year, GCHD's staff also provided presentations to regional clinical staff on the topics of Tobacco Reduction, Use, and Dependence. Working with the local media, GCHD staff requested and received in-kind airtime on local TV to promote the State of Michigan's Quitline. This same TV commercial aired on GCHD's social media channels. As a result of this work, GCHD staff increased Quitline phone traffic by 395 calls compared to last year.

"As any current smoker can attest to, it is difficult to quit smoking! However, a good plan can help you get past symptoms of withdrawal," stated Genesee County Health Department Health Officer, Mark Valacak. Working closely with the CDC, and using their resources, GCHD recommends these five steps to help residents kick the smoking habit.

1. Set a quit date. Quit smoking on the Great American Smokeout or another quit day within the next 2 weeks.

2. Tell your family and friends you plan to quit. Share your quit date with the important people in your life and ask for support. A daily e-mail, text message, or phone call can help you stay on course and provide moral support.

3. Anticipate and plan for challenges. The urge to smoke is short—usually only 3 to 5 minutes. Surprised? Those moments can feel intense. Before your quit day, write down healthy ways to cope.

Even one puff can feed a craving and make it stronger. Healthy choices include:

- Drinking water
- Taking a walk or climbing stairs
- Listening to a favorite song or playing a game
- Calling or texting a friend

4. Remove cigarettes and other tobacco from your home, car, and workplace. Throw away your cigarettes, matches, lighters, and ashtrays. Clean and freshen your car, home, and workplace. Old cigarette odors can cause cravings.

5. Talk to your pharmacist, doctor, or quitline coach about quit options. Nicotine patches, gum, or other approved quit medicines may help with cravings.

Individuals ready to quit should call The Michigan Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) or enroll on-line at <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/>. The Quitline provides free telephone coaching for the uninsured and those with a County Health Plan, Medicaid, and Medicare. Free nicotine patches are available for eligible enrollees. The Quitline also provides text messaging support and a self-guided on-line program to help individuals quit their tobacco habit. All pregnant women qualify for the Quitline regardless of insurance. The Quitline has special help for pregnant women and they earn rewards after every call. Let this year's Smokeout be the day you quit for good!

Genesee County Health Department. Your Health. Our Work.