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**Genesee County Health Department Celebrates Great American Smokeout  
November 16, 2017**

The Genesee County Health Department (GCHD) encourages all smokers to take the important step towards a healthier life by quitting smoking during the Great American Smokeout on Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. 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.

“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 Dr. Gary Johnson, Medical Director for the Genesee County Health Department. “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.”

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in Michigan, killing more than 16,200 residents each year. In Michigan, 20.7% of adults smoke cigarettes, and 17.9% of Michigan high school students use tobacco. Each year, 5,800 Michigan kids under the age of 18 become regular smokers. Thirty percent (30%) of cancer deaths in Michigan are attributable to cigarette smoking.

The Genesee/Thumb Region Tobacco Control and Prevention office is located at the Genesee County Health Department and serves Huron, Tuscola, Sanilac, St. Clair, Genesee, Lapeer, Bay, Saginaw, and Midland Counties. The goal of regional activities is to collaborate with neighboring health districts to improve the health of Michigan residents by reducing the number of diseases and deaths associated with tobacco use.

To celebrate the Great American Smokeout, Genesee County Health Department 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).

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. Free nicotine replacement therapy is available to those who qualify. The Quitline provides various tobacco cessation services including educational materials, text messaging, an online program, and referral to local resources for all Michigan residents.

Healthcare 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/>. For more information about the Michigan Tobacco Quitline visit <https://gchd.us> or <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/>. For more information about the Great American Smokeout visit the American Cancer Society's Web site at <https://cancer.org>.

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