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**For Immediate Release**  
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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Charlotte County Health Department Offers Public Health Advice Regarding Wildfire Smoke**

**(Port Charlotte, FL)** —The Charlotte County Health Department and the Florida Department of Health offer advice to citizens that may be impacted by wildfire smoke.

Smoke is a respiratory irritant, and can cause a scratchy throat, irritated eyes and nose and worsen conditions such as asthma and other chronic respiratory or lung conditions.

#### **How to protect your family from the health effects of smoke:**

Pay attention to local air quality reports and stay alert to any news coverage or health warnings related to smoke. It is especially important to limit time spent outdoors for children and persons with existing medical conditions.

Stay indoors and run your air conditioner, if you have one. Keep the fresh air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent bringing additional smoke inside. For best results, run the air conditioner with re-circulated air.

#### **Limit your exposure to the smoke by:**

- Staying indoors whenever possible
- Using air conditioners (air conditioned homes usually have lower air exchange rates than homes that use open windows for ventilation)
- Using mechanical air cleaners
- Keeping windows closed while driving in a vehicle
- Doing less strenuous physical activity (fast walking rather than jogging)
- Minimizing other sources of air pollution (avoid smoking tobacco, using wood burning stoves, burning candles or incense and vacuuming)

Mary Kay Burns, Charlotte County Health Department Interim Administrator advises, "If you don't have an air conditioner, staying inside with the windows closed may be dangerous in extremely hot weather. In these cases, seek alternative shelter." She adds, "Individuals with asthma and other respiratory diseases should follow your health management plan carefully. Call your health care provider if you have any questions or if your symptoms worsen."

For additional information contact the Charlotte County Health Department at 941-624-7200.

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