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NEWS RELEASE

Celebrate the 35th Great American Smokeout

Charlotte County Health Department Supports Tobacco Users in Their Quest to Quit

Port Charlotte (FL) – Florida Department of Health, Charlotte County Health Department and Tobacco Free Florida are celebrating the 35th Great American Smokeout by encouraging Floridians to be tobacco-free for twenty-four hours on Thursday, November 18. Charlotte County Health Department is partnering with the American Cancer Society, Fawcett Memorial Hospital and a host of other professionals from the community to help support tobacco users in their quest to quit. This free event on November 18 will be at The H2U Center in the Promenades Mall, 3280 Tamiami Trail Suite 493, Port Charlotte. Professionals from the community will be on hand conducting free screenings and providing the education and information to help you succeed. Activities will kickoff at 2:00 pm and continue through 6:00 pm and will include presentations by Dr. Donald Kennedy from Millennium Physicians Group, Students Working Against Tobacco and many more.

The Great American Smokeout, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, challenges people to plan in advance and quit smoking that day, or to use the day to make a plan to quit. The event raises awareness about the dangers of smoking and the many effective ways available to successfully quit. "The American Cancer Society continues to be an invaluable partner in our efforts to encourage current tobacco users to quit and to prevent non-users from starting to use tobacco," said Kim Berfield, Deputy Secretary of the Florida Department of Health. "The Great American Smokeout is a great opportunity to encourage people to make a long-term plan to quit for good."

Tobacco Free Florida offers a number of free resources to help smokers quit.

- Phone: Call the Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach who will help assess the user's addiction and create a personalized quit plan.
- Online: Enroll in online counseling with the Florida Quitline, where each user can create a personalized, web-based quit plan. Visit <https://www.quitnow.net/florida> to enroll.
- In-person: Free local classes are available in Port Charlotte and Punta Gorda. Details are available on the Charlotte County Health Department website at www.CharlotteCHD.com. Visit the Florida Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) Network's website, <http://ahectobacco.com> to locate a local AHEC and sign up for Quit Smoking Now group classes.

Floridians are encouraged to visit the Tobacco Free Florida website, www.tobaccofreeflorida.com, which is a comprehensive resource for both smokers and non-



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smokers that features effective quitting methods, smoking statistics, a calendar of statewide events, social media support, Florida Quitline access and more.

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States.ⁱ Each year an estimated 28,700 adult Floridians die from smoking.ⁱⁱ Despite these risks, more than 2.5 million Floridians, or 17.5 percent of the adult population, are current cigarette smokers.ⁱⁱⁱ In Florida, 61 percent of adults who have ever smoked have quit. In 2008, 55.7 percent of cigarette smokers in Florida made a quit attempt.^{iv} Those who weren't successful should continue trying because most successful quitters make several attempts before finally quitting permanently.^v

Visit the Charlotte County Health Department Website for additional tobacco information and more about The Great American Smokeout on November 18: www.CharlotteCHD.com.

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ⁱ CDC: Tobacco Use Targeting the Nation's Leading Killer At A Glance 2010

http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/pdf/2010/tobacco_2010.pdf

ⁱⁱ Florida's Health Performance Measures: http://www.doh.state.fl.us/planning_eval/phstats/flperforms/FLHealth.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ CDC: State Highlights http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/state_data/state_highlights/2010/states/florida/index.htm

^{iv} CDC: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/statesystem/DetailedReport/DetailedReports.aspx#ReportDetail>

^v DiClemente CC. Addiction and change: how addictions develop and addicted people recover. New York: Guilford Press, 2003.