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For Immediate Release

Dickinson-Iron District Health Department Supports National Kick Butts Day Initiative March 18, 2015

Kingsford and Iron River, MI – March 11, 2015 - Young people from around the country are taking part in Kick Butts Day, a day of activism that empowers youth to stand out, speak up and seize control against Big Tobacco at events across the United States and around the world.

21.4% of adults and 11.8% of young people currently smoke cigarettes in Michigan. There are over 10,300 new youth smokers each year in Michigan, and nearly 213,000 kids alive in Michigan today will eventually die from a tobacco-related disease. Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in Michigan. Each year tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure result in the deaths of more than 14,400 Michigan residents, and cost the state more than \$4.5 billion in health care costs.

In 2014 the United States Surgeon General released its anniversary report, *The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress* which highlighted progress in tobacco control and prevention, and presented new data on the health consequences of smoking. Importantly, the report discussed opportunities for potentially ending the smoking epidemic in the United States. According to the report, if current rates of smoking continue, 5.6 million Americans younger than 18 years of age alive today are projected to die prematurely from smoking-related disease.

“The good news is that the U.S. Surgeon General identified evidence-based tobacco control interventions that are effective in reducing tobacco use. Specifically, hard-hitting media campaigns, increased tobacco taxes, access to tobacco dependence treatment, smoke-free policies, and comprehensive statewide tobacco control programs funded at CDC-recommended levels are all effective in preventing initiation and promoting quitting,” noted Kelly Rumpf, Health Educator. “Unfortunately, Michigan spends only \$1.5 million on tobacco control, just 1.4% of what the CDC recommends.” In 2011 the tobacco industry spent over \$275 million to market their products in Michigan.

In previous years, SADD students in Dickinson and Iron Counties have taken part in a variety of activities to protect kids from tobacco, such as educating elementary kids on the dangers of using tobacco and to not give in to peer pressure. Future efforts may include cleaning up parks and beaches from cigarette butts. Locally, the Health Department along with the Dickinson-Iron Tobacco Free Community Coalition are working on educating local elected officials and community residents on the benefits of tobacco-free outdoor recreation areas. They would like to see all of our parks and beaches adopt tobacco-free policies. Not only is this a health benefit to all but it portrays positive role modeling for our young people.

Rumpf stated, “In addition to the work taking place in our community, there are policy changes at the state level that would drastically reduce the death and disease caused by tobacco use in Michigan. Increasing the price of cigarettes and other tobacco products is the single most effective way to reduce youth and adult tobacco use rates, especially when a portion of the revenue generated is dedicated to comprehensive tobacco control programming. In addition, Michigan should be spending a portion of its Master Settlement Agreement revenue on tobacco control.”

For more information about Kick Butts Day and tobacco-free parks and outdoor recreation areas in the community contact Rumpf at 779-7234. For help in quitting tobacco use, talk with your healthcare provider or contact the Michigan Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-784-8669. For information on the national initiative, visit the Kick Butts Day website at kickbuttsday.org.

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