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World No Tobacco Day 2014

May 21, 2014 - Kingsford and Iron River, MI. World No Tobacco Day was created by the member states of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1987 and is celebrated annually on May 31st. The goal of World No Tobacco Day is to contribute to protecting present and future generations not only from the devastating health consequences due to tobacco, but also from the social, environmental and economic scourges of tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke. Tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable death globally.

The theme for World No Tobacco Day 2014 is raising taxes on tobacco. In celebration of World No Tobacco Day, the Dickinson-Iron Tobacco Free Community Coalition continues to work with local schools on strengthening and expanding their current tobacco free policies to include all *off* campus events as well. Local schools that currently have updated policies that include off campus events include Dickinson-Iron Intermediate School District, Breitung Township Schools and Norway-Vulcan Area Schools.

Globally, tobacco kills nearly 6 million people each year. More than five million of those deaths are the result of direct tobacco use while more than 600,000 are the result of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke. Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Michigan—killing more than 12,700 Michigan residents each year. More than 16 million Americans suffer from a disease caused by smoking, and every day more than 3,200 people younger than 18 years of age smoke their first cigarette.

Michigan ranks 12th in the United States with a cigarette tax of \$2.00 per pack, tied with 4 four other states. It has been ten years since Michigan last raised its tax on cigarettes. Research indicates that raising the tax on cigarettes by \$1.00, to \$3.00 per pack, would decrease the prevalence of adult smoking by 2.4-3.2% and reduce the prevalence of youth smoking by 11-21%. Youth are especially sensitive to price increases in tobacco products. Michigan revenues would rise by a conservative estimate of \$200 million annually. Increasing the tax on other tobacco products to parity with the cigarette tax of \$3.00 per pack would raise additional revenue and prevent a price-based shift in use of other tobacco products, especially among youth.

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According to WHO, raising taxes on tobacco is the most cost-effective way to reduce tobacco use. “The specific goals of World No Tobacco Day 2014 are that governments increase taxes on tobacco to levels that reduce tobacco consumption, and that individuals and civil society organizations encourage their governments to increase taxes on tobacco to levels that reduce consumption,” noted Kelly Rumpf, Health Educator at the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department. “Raising the tax on tobacco in Michigan would reduce smoking rates, prevent children from becoming tobacco users, raise revenue for our state, and provide Michigan with significant savings in chronic disease health care costs.”

The Michigan Department of Community Health offers a free telephone service to help tobacco users quit. Callers can receive information and referral, and if qualified, can enroll in a free coaching program and receive nicotine replacement medications to assist them in quitting. Call the Michigan Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) or visit online at <http://www.njhcommunity.org/michigan/>.

For more information, please contact Rumpf at 906-779-7234. For help in quitting tobacco use, talk with your healthcare provider or contact the Michigan Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-784-8669. For more information about World No Tobacco Day visit <http://www.who.int/campaigns/no-tobacco-day/2014/en/> .

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