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## DOH-Santa Rosa Calls For Quit Attempts, Awareness During Great American Smokeout

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**Milton, Fla.** – With the annual Great American Smokeout taking place November 19, Tobacco Free Florida in Santa Rosa County is using this observance to encourage people to make a plan to quit smoking using the free tools and services available to Floridians.

Tracing its history back more than 40 years, the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout marks a date when smokers are encouraged to use the date to either make a plan or to begin their quit journey.<sup>1</sup>

Quitting smoking can add up to 10 years to life expectancy.<sup>2</sup> The health benefits of quitting smoking include reducing the risk of heart attack and stroke, improving lung function and lowering the chances of getting an array of different cancers.<sup>3,4</sup> The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) adds that smoking may increase your risk of severe illness related to COVID-19.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to a healthier body, quitting smoking can lead to a healthier wallet. One year after quitting smoking, a former pack-a-day smoker can save over \$2,200, based on today's prices. Over five years, this adds up to a savings of over \$11,000.<sup>6</sup>

To raise awareness of the dangers of tobacco use and encourage businesses to provide smoking cessation aids to their employees, tobacco cessation specialists with the DOH-Santa Rosa Tobacco Program will visit local businesses to share information on the services available, including cessation classes offered by the Area Health Education Center (AHEC). Classes are free and include aids such as nicotine patches for those who are eligible.

"Since 2013, when we began our efforts to encourage business owners to offer smoking cessation options to their employees, we've seen the adult smoking rate in our county go from 24.5 percent to 18.5 percent," said Vince Nguyen, health educator consultant and tobacco cessation specialist with the Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County. "That's a significant decrease in our adult smoking rate but there's still more to be done. The Great American Smokeout is an opportunity we can take advantage of to build further on the progress we've made."

Multi-unit housing complexes have also been targeted for smoking cessation efforts. In 2013 there were no smoke-free complexes in Santa Rosa County. Today, 30 have adopted smoke-free policies and tobacco cessation specialists in the DOH-Santa Rosa Tobacco Program continue their efforts to bring more on board.

Information on the history of the Great American Smokeout, national activities to support quitting and other materials can be found at <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/great-american-smokeout.html>. Tobacco Free Florida's quit tips, tools and more are available by visiting [www.tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com) or by calling 1-877-U-CAN-NOW.

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## About Tobacco Free Florida

The Florida Department of Health's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Since the program began in 2007, more than 234,000 Floridians have successfully quit using one of Tobacco Free Florida's free tools and services. There are now approximately 451,000 fewer adult smokers in Florida than there was 10 years ago, and the state has saved \$17.7 billion in health care costs. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way services, visit [www.tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com) or follow the campaign on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida](http://www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida) or on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla](http://www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla).

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the Great American Smokeout." American Cancer Society. <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/great-american-smokeout/history-of-the-great-american-smokeout.html>. [accessed 10 August 2020.]

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014. [accessed 10 August 2020.]

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS). (2014). Let's Make the Next Generation Tobacco-Free: Your Guide to the 50th Anniversary Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health (Consumer Booklet). Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health. [accessed 10 August 2020.]

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [A Report of the Surgeon General. How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: What It Means to You](#). Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2010 [accessed 2020 August 10].

<sup>5</sup> "Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): People with Certain Medical Conditions. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html#smoking>. [accessed 2020 August 27.]

<sup>6</sup> "State Excise and Sales Taxes Per Pack of Cigarettes Total Amounts & State Rankings." Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/assets/factsheets/0202.pdf> [accessed 2020 August 10.]