

August 31, 2017

## Teen in Santa Rosa County Helps Lead Florida's Movement Against Tobacco

*Students Working Against Tobacco Elect Catalina Rios to Its Leadership Board*



### Contact:

Gina Rosso  
Gina.Rosso@FLHealth.gov  
850-983-5200 x 2297

**Milton Fla.** — Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT), Florida's statewide youth-led movement to combat the tobacco industry, announced the names of its new Youth Advocacy Board members. Catalina Rios, a senior at Navarre High School, was one of those members. As a YAB member, Catalina will be on the board to represent the Region 1 SWAT chapters. Region 1 includes the 18 counties from Escambia to Madison and Taylor counties. This is Santa Rosa County's 10<sup>th</sup> year on the advocacy board.

The Youth Advocacy Board works in collaboration with the Florida Department of Health's Bureau of Tobacco Free Florida to help plan SWAT organization's direction and goals, and provide input on the state's youth prevention efforts. Students work with county grantees to support initiatives that educate their peers about tobacco use, help protect youth from tobacco, and strengthen local policies, especially those that protect the public from secondhand smoke exposure.

SWAT aims to empower, educate and equip Florida youth to revolt against Big Tobacco. The group is a movement of inspired youth working together to de-glamorize tobacco use. Its efforts aim to shape tobacco free norms, and make tobacco less desirable, less acceptable and less accessible.

Other teens elected into the Youth Advocacy Board are, from Region 1: Lily Anderson, Washington County; Kendra O'Mallery, Okaloosa County; Ja'Toria Stephens, Bay County. Region 2: Amaya Figueroa, Baker County; Destiny Cole, Flagler County; Emma Ronchetti, Levy County; Laycee Hallman, Levy County. Region 3: Allyssa Williams, Osceola County; Nicole Jimenez, Seminole County; Sachit Gali, Sarasota County; Emma Buscemi, Hernando County. Region 4: Sebastian Suarez, St. Lucie County; Amanda Bouqeta, St. Lucie County; Maddie Chabab, St. Lucie County; Drew Latta, Miami-Dade County.

"I'm looking forward to gaining more knowledge about tobacco prevention, and working with other youth advocates from across the state of Florida," said Catalina. "Working within this program has helped me to develop my public speaking and leadership skills, and has really opened my eyes to Big Tobaccos manipulation!"

Members of the SWAT Youth Advocacy Board will serve a term through June 30, 2018.

###

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#) and on [Facebook](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](#).

### **About Tobacco Free Florida**

The department'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 159,000 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](#) or follow the campaign on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida](#) or on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla](#).