
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT IS NEXT WEEK

KCHD Encourages Residents to Quit Smoking

GRAND RAPIDS – Mark your calendars! The American Cancer Society's 37th annual **Great American Smokeout** is coming up Thursday, November 15, 2012. Encourage friends and family to quit smoking – or set a date to quit, even if it's for just one day. Chances are pretty good that you know at least one smoker. According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Survey of 2008, 1-in-5 Kent County residents smoke every few days or more. For adults ages 18-24, those statistics were higher: 1-in-3 responded that they smoke either every day or every few days.

November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Lung cancer is still leading cause of cancer-related deaths in Michigan, blamed for killing 5,975 people in Michigan in 2009. The Michigan Department of Community Health says smoking causes 90-percent of all lung cancers, and the risk increases with the quantity and duration of cigarette use. The U.S. Surgeon General says there is hope. The risk of coronary heart disease is cut in half within one year of quitting.

"Smoking is highly addictive, and quitting is very difficult," said Cathy Raevsky, the Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. "Most smokers make several attempts to quit before they are successful. If you can quit for a day, you can quit for a week, and if you can quit for a week, you can kick the habit for life." Last year, Kent County was awarded a \$1 million Community Transformation Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with one of the goals being "decrease death and disability caused by tobacco use."

There are many smoking cessation programs and tools that can help you stop smoking. Many insurance plans, including Medicare or Medicaid, may pay for assistance.

- The MDCH Tobacco Quitline, (800) 784-8669, provides free telephone coaching for the uninsured as well as Medicaid and Medicare clients. Free nicotine replacement medication may be available for those who qualify. For more information and a free printable Michigan Smoker's Quit Kit, visit www.michigan.gov/tobacco.
- BecomeAnEX.org is a free, interactive website that shows smokers how to re-learn life without cigarettes. The site offers free, personalized quit plans and online support.
- The American Cancer Society has tools to help kick the habit. Call (800) 227-2345 for details.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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