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NEVADA STATE HEALTH DIVISION

NEWS RELEASE

National Public Health Week Kicks Off April 6, 2009

In keeping with this year's theme, "Building the Foundation for a Healthy America," the Nevada State Health Division and Local Health Authorities Partner to Encourage Smoking Cessation

Carson City – During the month of April, the Health Division, in partnership with Southern Nevada Health District, Washoe County Health District, and Carson City Health and Human Services will start a statewide quit smoking campaign.

“As we kick off National Public Health Week, the stop using tobacco message is extremely important to share with our Nevada residents,” Dr. Mary Guinan, State Health Officer said. “We know that smokers are much more likely to try and stop smoking when the price of tobacco products increases. The increase in federal excise tax of sixty one cents, effective April 1, 2009, will dramatically increase the cost of cigarettes and other tobacco products. This increase, combined with the state of our economy, provides an important intervention opportunity to help Nevada smokers quit. Smoking harms virtually every organ in the body, decreases a person’s life expectancy, and causes debilitating disease. Now is the time for all Nevadans to join in the campaign, lend support to their loved ones, and help them stop using tobacco.”

Stop smoking efforts in Nevada have been successful, as indicated by a new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study (MMWR, March 13), which shows that the prevalence of smoking in Nevada has decreased yearly (except in 1998 – 1999) from a high of 30.4% in 1998 to a low of 21.5% in 2007. In state rankings, Nevada moved from second highest smoking rate to 16th highest in the same time period and had the steepest decline in the nation. This accomplishment could not have occurred without the efforts of those working to prevent tobacco-related diseases including the Nevada Tobacco Prevention Coalition, all governmental, nonprofit and academic public health workers and concerned citizens.

The statewide campaign will include: 1) letters to physicians urging them to encourage their patients to stop smoking, including helpful materials to aid their patients; 2) an open letter to patients, urging them to quit smoking, which will also be sent to media, statewide. The patient letter provides information about the health risks, the increase in the federal tax, health benefits when a person stops smoking, and strategies to assist the smoker to quit.

(MORE)



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NEVADA STATE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

As of April 1st, the federal tax on cigarettes will increase by 62 cents per pack. That means a pack-a-day smoker will spend more than \$4.54 per day; \$1,650 on cigarettes in a year; a 2-pack-a-day smoker will spend almost \$3,300 in a year. Quitting eliminates all the expenses that go along with smoking and more importantly, by quitting, a person's health begins to improve immediately.

Despite all of the reasons to quit, making that decision is a challenge. It has been shown that smokers who seek support have an increased chance of quitting forever. Family, friends, local counseling programs, and physicians, are a few areas where people can receive support.

A great step is to call the Nevada Tobacco Users' Helpline, 1.800.QUITNOW (1.800.784.8669). The helpline, which operates six days a week, provides free advice and counseling on how to stop smoking. The helpline is available Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.; and Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

For more information about the Nevada State Health Division, go to: <http://health.nv.gov>.

NOTE TO MEDIA:

The Nevada State Health Division will be sending out press releases throughout National Public Health Week. The planned issues that will be highlighted:

Childhood Immunization
Perinatal HIV
Infection Control
Lead Screening

If you need additional information, please contact Martha Framsted, PIO: 775.684.4014 or mframsted@health.nv.gov

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