



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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TENNESSEE YOUNGSTERS “KICK BUTTS” TO FIGHT TOBACCO USE

National Kick Butts Day is March 24

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Thousands of youngsters throughout Tennessee will join peers across the country to celebrate Kick Butts Day on March 24, 2010. This nationwide day of youth activism against tobacco is designed to raise awareness of the risks and concerns associated with children and tobacco use.

“Young people are a powerful part of the solution to reducing youth tobacco use,” said Health Commissioner Susan R. Cooper, MSN, RN. “Tennessee youngsters are sending two important messages: they want the tobacco industry to stop targeting them with advertising and they want elected leaders at all levels to do more to protect them from tobacco. I applaud the efforts of all Tennessee kids who are taking part in Kick Butts Day to share this lifesaving message with their peers.”

Every day, more than 3,500 American children try their first cigarettes, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reports. Another 1,000 juveniles every day become new regular daily smokers, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Statistics show how deadly this daily habit can be: smoking accounts for approximately 9,400 deaths in Tennessee every year, according to the CDC, with nearly half of those due to lung cancer. Nationwide, CDC reports smoking is responsible for almost one in five deaths.

Secondhand smoke is another serious problem. In Tennessee, the Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids reports 488,000 children are exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes. CDC estimates secondhand smoke is responsible for 35,000 deaths nationwide each year from heart disease in non-smokers who live with smokers, as well as lung cancer deaths, lung infections and asthma attacks.

The Tennessee Tobacco QuitLine, 1-800-QUIT-NOW, can help by offering personalized support for Tennessee teen and adult residents who want to quit smoking by connecting them with trained quit coaches to guide them through the quitting process. Callers receive ongoing professional coaching via individually scheduled calls with a quit coach personally assigned to them. QuitLine callers also have complimentary access to relapse prevention techniques, printed resource materials, information on nicotine replacement therapies and other services to help in the quitting process. This convenient and confidential service is free and available to Tennessee residents in both English and Spanish. The service is also available for the deaf and hard of hearing at TTY: 1-877-559-3816.

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The Tennessee Department of Health's county health clinics also offer smoking cessation services to help both teenage and adult smokers kick the habit. Contact your local health department for details. A list of Tennessee's health department locations can be found online at <http://health.state.tn.us/localdepartments.htm>.

The benefits of quitting smoking are significant and almost immediate. Within 20 minutes of giving up tobacco, elevated blood pressure and pulse decrease; in two days, nerve endings regenerate; in two weeks, circulation improves; in one to nine months, fatigue and shortness of breath decrease; and in one year, the risk of a heart attack is cut in half.

The Tennessee Tobacco QuitLine, 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-800-784-8669), is a statewide, free tobacco cessation treatment program made possible through the Department of Health. There is no charge to callers for services, and callers have unlimited access to a quit coach through the QuitLine. Hours are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Central time. Call to learn more about the QuitLine or visit the Web site at <http://health.state.tn.us/tobaccoquitline.htm>.

Kick Butts Day is a national effort led by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. To learn more and find a list of Tennessee events, go to <http://kickbuttsday.org/>.

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This news release can be accessed online at <http://news.tennesseeanytime.org/taxonomy/term/30>.