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PRESS RELEASE

TO: All Marquette County Media Outlets

FROM: Mary Harris LMSW, Health Educator, Marquette County Health Department

DATE: November 13, 2017

SUBJECT: Great American Smokeout

Marquette County Celebrates the Great American Smokeout

November 16, 2017

The American Cancer Society has been celebrating the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November for the past forty years. The Marquette County Cares Coalition (funded by the NorthCare Network) and the Marquette County Health Department are proud to promote the 2017 Great American Smokeout on Thursday, November 16th.

The Great American Smokeout is an opportunity for everyone in Marquette County to commit to healthy, tobacco-free lives, not just for a day, but year round. Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death; one out of every five U.S. deaths are tobacco related. According to the American Cancer Society, the most important thing smokers can do to improve their health is to quit cigarettes and other forms of combustible tobacco.

We are all aware of the strength of tobacco addiction and the devastating impact of continued use. Quitting tobacco use is a process which requires planning and support. It may take several attempts to maintain a tobacco-free lifestyle. In Michigan, 20.4% of Michigan adults smoke cigarettes. Of these adults, 58.8% reported attempting to quit in 2016. Tobacco products are highly addictive and most users must make several quit attempts before they are able to succeed. According to the Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (2013-2015), 28.2% of Marquette County residents identify as former smokers. Their success is likely due to a combination of therapies and lifestyle changes such as physician involvement, medication or nicotine replacement, counseling, self-help materials, exercise, environmental and nutrition changes and a support network of family and friends.

The 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health shows that approximately 65,000 Michigan youth used tobacco products during the past 30 days. Studies have shown that the earlier a person begins use, the higher the risk of lifetime addiction. To encourage youth to live tobacco free, encourage participation in activities which inhibit tobacco use, support spending free time in public places where smoking is not allowed, work together to make a list of reasons why to live tobacco-free, and provide clear standards through your own lifestyle.

We encourage all Marquette County residents to demonstrate their commitment to healthy, tobacco-free living. For 24 hour support please contact the Michigan Tobacco Quitline (1-800-784-8669). If you are interested in developing a quit plan, quit kits are available at the Marquette County Health Department, Community Outreach Department, by contacting Mary Harris at (906)315-2613. For more information about the Great American Smokeout visit the American Cancer Society's Web site at <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco.html>