



MEDIA RELEASE

Information **Advisory** **Warning** **Update**

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Helping Youth Stay Tobacco-Free in the New School Year

As students head back to school, the St. Clair County Health Department and St. Clair County Smoke-Free Community Team encourages parents and health care providers to engage in conversations with kids about tobacco use and to remind kids that chew tobacco and e-cigarettes are not a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes. Parents can also protect kids from tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure by providing a tobacco-free example and home environment.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, youth are sensitive to nicotine and can feel dependent earlier than adults. Nearly 9 out of 10 smokers start smoking by age 18, and because of nicotine addiction, about three out of four teen smokers end up smoking into adulthood, even if they intend to quit after a few years.

“Although we have made significant progress in protecting our youth from tobacco-related health harms, we still have a long way to go,” stated Annette Mercatante, Medical Health Officer of the St. Clair County Health Department. *“Far too many youth are still using tobacco and are being exposed to the dangerous health effects of secondhand smoke.”*

The Michigan Tobacco Quitline provides services for Michigan youth of any age. Teenagers and young adults who want help kicking their tobacco habit can call the Michigan Tobacco Quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669). It is a free service. The Quitline provides free telephone counseling, text messaging support and a self-guided on-line program to help youth quit their tobacco habit. Those 10-21 years of age can also call the St. Clair County Health Department’s Teen Health Center at (810) 987-1311 for more information on smoking cessation support services available for youth.

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