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Public Health District

## News Release

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### **Join us for the Great American Smokeout, November 18, 2021.**

Quitting smoking isn't easy. It takes time. And a plan. You don't have to stop smoking in one day. Start with day one. Let the Great American Smokeout event, on November 18, be your day to start your journey toward a smoke-free life. You'll be joining thousands of people who smoke across the country in taking an important step toward a healthier life and reducing your cancer risk.

### **What do we know about smoking?**

Smoking weakens your immune system, lowering your body's ability to fight off disease. We know that adults who smoke have a higher risk for getting sick with pneumonia and having severe illness from infections like the flu. Adults who smoke also have a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

If you smoke, the best choice for your lung health is to quit.

- Smoking leads to disease and disability and harms nearly every organ of the body.
- Cigarette smoking remains the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States.
- The tobacco industry spends billions of dollars each year on marketing cigarettes.
- Smoking costs the United States hundreds of billions of dollars each year.
- In 2019, 14.0% of all adults (34.1 million people) currently smoked cigarettes: 15.3% of men, 12.7% of women.
- Each day, about 1,600 youth try their first cigarette.
- Many adult cigarette smokers want to quit smoking.

### **I want to QUIT Tobacco! How can I get assistance?**

*Call: 1-800-QUIT-NOW*

Quit coaches are ready to help you at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). Free Quitline services are available 24/7, in over 200 languages and Spanish-speaking residents can

call, 1-855-DÉJELO-YA (1-855-335-3569). For qualified callers, a free supply of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) can be mailed directly to your home.

### *Web-based Coaching*

Don't want to call? That is ok, a web-based option is also available. After enrolling on the QuitNow website, a coach can be reached via the chat link to provide support when you need it.

## **What can our organization do to encourage employees to stop smoking?**

There are many different options, but a few suggestions are below:

- Offer cessation options with your employees and families
- Encourage leadership support
- Implement worksite tobacco-free policies

“We know that helping employees improve their health is top priority for worksites. Please help us encourage employees to stop smoking. We are happy to provide tobacco free flyers or assist with implement a tobacco-free worksite policy. We are happy to work with you to accommodate your worksites unique needs. Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council (PWWC) is here to help your organization have a healthier and happier workforce!” Nicole Berosek, MS, Organizational Wellness Coordinator.

Please reach out to receive additional flyers and/or marketing materials to educate your employees and family members. We are here to help!

To learn more about the Great American Smokeout on November 18, 2021, please join us for our monthly Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council (PWWC) wellness chat on November 11<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm. During this call, we will discuss tobacco free options and ways to encourage employees to quit smoking. If you are interested in joining this wellness chat, please contact Nicole Berosek at [nberosek@pphd.org](mailto:nberosek@pphd.org) or register at <https://tinyurl.com/yyczm6mf>.

For additional information about worksite wellness, visit [www.pphd.org/pwwc.html](http://www.pphd.org/pwwc.html) or call Berosek at 308-262-2217. The Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council is proudly part of Panhandle Public Health District.

The Council specializes in supporting employers in the Panhandle region. We recognize that many employers support a diverse and remote workforce and offer innovative ways to overcome the challenge of working with a virtual team. We understand that many of our employers do not have full-time wellness resources and work to provide resources and training to make running a worksite wellness program as easy as possible.

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle community.

References: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/tobacco/tobaccosmoking.html>;  
[https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/index.htm); <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/great-american-smokeout.html>; <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/I-Want-to-Quit-Tobacco.aspx>