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The Great American Smokeout, November 15th 2012

Hyde County Health Department encourages smokers to quit for one day.

The Great American Smokeout, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, is an annual event that encourages smokers to quit for at least 1 day in the hope they will be encouraged to stop permanently (Great American Smokeout, 2012). The 37th annual event will be held on November 15, 2012. The Hyde County Health Department encourages smokers in the community to participate and to commit to a long-term plan to quit for good.

Approximately two out of three smokers want to quit, and 52.4% of current adult smokers tried to quit within the past year (Quitting smoking among adults.) Health-care providers should routinely identify smokers and other tobacco users, advise them to quit, and assist those trying to quit (Rockville, 2008). Getting help (e.g., through counseling or medication) can double or triple the chances for quitting (Rockville, 2008). Tobacco users can contact the North Carolina Tobacco Users' Helpline at 1-800-QUIT NOW for free assistance to help them quit. They can speak with a professional, licensed counselor for confidential assistance.

"Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable disability, disease and death in our Nation, responsible for approximately one in five deaths annually, or about 443,000 deaths per year," said Wes Smith, Hyde County Health Department Director." "Nearly one in five Hyde County adults use tobacco, and are at risk of tobacco related diseases including cancer, heart disease, stroke and other serious health problems. 64% of Hyde County residents reported that they had been exposed to secondhand smoke in the last year. It is vital that we encourage people who use tobacco in Hyde County to want to quit and offer any support services that we can."

Since 2002, the number of former smokers in the United States has exceeded the number of current smokers (Rockville, 2008), however, but 19.3% of U.S. adults (about 45.3 million) still smoke. The most effective way to quit smoking is to make a plan and get assistance to develop a strategy. Within five years of kicking the habit, the risk of premature death is reduced by 50 percent and after 15 years the risk is the same as someone who never smoked.

The Hyde County Health Department offers several tips to assist:

- Spend time in places where smoking is prohibited, especially the first few days after quitting;
- Drink large quantities of water and fruit juice;
- Avoid alcohol, coffee, and other beverages associated with smoking;
- Eat several small meals to maintain blood sugar levels, avoid sugary or spicy foods that trigger a desire for cigarettes;
- Take deep rhythmic breaths to relax;
- Join a support group

In an effort to support those who have decided to quit tobacco, the TRU (Tobacco.Reality.Unfiltered) club at Mattamuskeet Early College will be packaging Quit Kits and will be available at various doctor's offices, the Hyde County Health Department, and with the County Human Resource Office. For information about tobacco products or secondhand smoke, contact the Youth Tobacco Prevention Coordinator, Lara Snyder at 252.475.5081 or larasnyder@darenc.com.

The Hyde County Department of Health support's the North Carolina Tobacco Control and Prevention Branch's Youth Tobacco Prevention Program in Hyde County and has worked to encourage Hyde County residents to quit smoking. For information or free support in quitting, call the NC Tobacco Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit [www.quitlinenc.com](http://quitlinenc.com). Visit www.cancer.org for more information on the Great American Smokeout.

References

Great American Smokeout. (2012). Retrieved October 29, 2012, from American Cancer Society: <http://www.cancer.org/healthy/stayawayfromtobacco/greatamericansmokeout>

Quitting smoking among adults. (n.d.). Retrieved October 29, 2012, from Centers for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6044a2.htm>

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