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National Public Health Week 2018

During the first full week of April each year, the American Public Health Association brings together communities across the United States to observe National Public Health Week. In 2018, this event will be held April 2 – 8. The week is a time to recognize the contributions of public health, and highlight issues that are important to improving the public's health.

In 2018, National Public Health Week kicks off by highlighting behavioral health, and focusing on advocating for improved access to mental and behavioral health services. People experiencing mental and behavioral health issues smoke cigarettes at a much higher rate than the general population, but are less likely to quit than the general population. Approximately 25% of adults in the U.S. have some form of mental illness or substance use disorder, and these adults consume almost 40% of all cigarettes smoked by adults. People with mental illness or substance use disorders die approximately 5 years earlier than those without these disorders, and many of these deaths are caused by smoking cigarettes.

There are evidence-based methods for helping tobacco users, including those with mental illness or substance use disorders, quit. In addition, there are strategies that providers can implement to help those experiencing behavioral health issues to quit using tobacco. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the following strategies may be effective:

- Mental health facilities should consider going smoke-free, including prohibiting tobacco use among employees or encouraging staff to quit.
- Counselors should ask clients who smoke cigarettes or use other tobacco products about their interest in quitting while in substance abuse treatment.
- The practice of providing mental health patients with cigarettes as an incentive or reward should be discontinued. Additionally, staff should not be allowed to smoke cigarettes with patients.
- Extra help to succeed in quitting should be offered to patients who smoke cigarettes. This can include more counseling, combining stop-smoking medicines or using them longer, and follow-up to care (e.g., telephone calls by a counselor, extended counseling, or continued medications).

In addition, for individuals interested in quitting smoking, there are resources available to help. District Health Department 10 provides free local classes and individual support. The Michigan Tobacco Quitline (1-800-784-8669) offers free phone coaching for the uninsured, pregnant women, residents enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare, veterans, cancer patients, and American Indians, and free nicotine replacement therapy to those who qualify.

Michigan spends \$4.59 billion annually on health care costs directly caused by smoking. In contrast, Michigan spends only \$1.63 million on tobacco prevention and control programming. "Increased and sustained funding for evidence-based tobacco prevention and control

The mission of District Health Department #10 is to promote and enhance the health of our communities and environment through protection, prevention, and intervention. Serving Crawford, Lake, Mason, Missaukee, Oceana, Kalkaska, Manistee, Mecosta, Newaygo, and Wexford Counties.

programming is necessary to reduce tobacco use, protect young people from a lifetime of addiction to nicotine, and ensure that current tobacco users, including those with mental illness or substance use disorders, have access to resources to help them quit using tobacco,” stated Karen Ripke, Tobacco Treatment Specialist for District Health Department #10

“National Public Health Week is a reminder that everyone deserves the opportunity to safely live, work, learn and play. Preventing tobacco use and helping current tobacco users quit is an important part of making that happen,” noted Ripke.

For more information about National Public Health Week visit <http://www.nphw.org/> . For help with quitting tobacco call the Michigan Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/>. For additional information, please contact your local office of District Health Department #10.

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