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For Immediate Release

**Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department Celebrates
Great American Smokeout
November 16, 2017**

The American Cancer Society marks the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November each year by encouraging smokers to quit that day or to develop a plan to quit smoking. By doing so, smokers will be taking an important step towards a healthier life. This year's Great American Smokeout will be observed on Thursday November 16th.

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in Michigan, killing more than 16,200 residents each year, with thirty percent (30%) of cancer deaths being attributable to cigarette smoking. On the average, 15.5% of adults in Benzie and Leelanau counties smoke cigarettes, and across the state, 29% of Michigan kids use tobacco. A recent survey conducted by Healthcare Providers in Benzie and Leelanau counties identified that tobacco use is one of the top health problems they see in their communities.

Tobacco products are highly addictive. Therefore, most users make several quit attempts before they are successful. However, there are proven resources available to help tobacco users quit. Quitters are most successful when using a combination of therapies, including resources such as nicotine replacement, counseling, self-help materials, and a strong support network of family and friends.

"The Great American Smokeout is an opportunity to remind tobacco users that they can succeed, and to support tobacco users in their efforts to quit," stated Michelle Klein, Personal Health Director for the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department. "Quitting tobacco use is the single best thing you can do for your health. The positive effects on health are both short and long term, and quitting benefits everyone, regardless of age," says Klein.

According to the American Cancer Society, the body begins to recover within minutes of quitting smoking. Heart rate and blood pressure drops, and within 12 hours carbon monoxide levels in blood return to normal. Benefits continue over time, including improved circulation and lung function, reduced risk of coronary heart disease and reduced risk of cancer.

To celebrate the Great American Smokeout, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is encouraging health care providers to ask their patients about tobacco use at every visit, provide advice to tobacco users about the benefits of quitting, and refer clients to the Michigan Tobacco Quitline (1-800-784-8669).

The Michigan Tobacco Quitline is an evidence-based service that continues to provide free telephone 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. The Quitline provides services including materials, text messaging, an online program, and referral to all Michigan residents.

Providers can refer their patients and clients to the Quitline, and individual tobacco users can contact the Quitline directly at 1-800-784-8669, or enroll online at <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/>. Additional information, including a fax referral form for providers, is available at the website. Staff and providers in all health care settings can refer patients and clients to the Michigan Tobacco Quitline.

For more information about the Michigan Tobacco Quitline visit <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/>, or contact the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department at 231-882-4409. For more information about the Great American Smokeout visit the American Cancer Society's Web site at www.cancer.org.

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