

March 31, 2016

NEW STUDENTS WORKING AGAINST TOBACCO CLUBS IN OKALOOSA COUNTY SCHOOLS



Contact: Ryan Mims
HealthyOkaloosaPIO@flhealth.gov
(850) 833-9240 ext. 2162
Cell: (850) 420-2198

Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. — The Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) wants to recognize the new Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) clubs in area schools. DOH-Okaloosa would like to commend the students and advisors for working to make Okaloosa County a healthier place to live, learn, work, and play.

This school year, new SWAT clubs have been established at:

- Niceville High School
- C.W. Ruckel Middle School

In addition, SWAT clubs are also at Fort Walton Beach High School, Crestview High School, and Shoal River Middle School.

“Tobacco is a main contributing cause of premature death in Okaloosa County,” stated Dr. Karen A. Chapman, Director of DOH-Okaloosa. “SWAT members are a crucial part of preventing tobacco use and promoting healthy lifestyles to their peers and families. DOH-Okaloosa appreciates the partnerships with the schools, club advisors, and students to focus efforts to reduce effects of tobacco in Okaloosa County.”

Some recent accomplishments by Okaloosa County SWAT members include:

- Presented a resolution to city council members of Fort Walton Beach, Niceville, Crestview, Laurel Hill, Shalimar, and Mary Esther that urges retailers to ban the sale of candy flavored tobacco not covered by FDA regulations. The resolution passed unanimously in all cities.
- Presented the same resolution to the Board of County Commissioners. The passage of the resolution resulted in a significant win in reducing the use of tobacco in our community.
- Educated hundreds of elementary school students and community members on the dangers of tobacco through presentations and events.
- Worked with the Okaloosa County School District to update the district’s Tobacco Policy to include the banning of electronic nicotine delivery devices on school property.

About Students Working Against Tobacco

SWAT is Florida's statewide youth organization working to mobilize, educate and equip Florida youth to revolt against and de-glamorize Big Tobacco. SWAT is a united movement of empowered youth working towards a tobacco free future.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board, works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at @HealthyFla and on Facebook. For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.

###



SWAT members at C.W. Ruckel Middle School spreading the word on the health effects of tobacco.



SWAT members at Niceville High School work toward a tobacco free future by educating peers on the effects of tobacco use.