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DOH-OKALOOSA EXPOSES THE RISKS OF SECONDHAND SMOKE

Eighth Annual Tobacco Free Florida Week Aims to Break the Myth that Secondhand Smoke is Harmless



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Fort Walton Beach, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health’s Tobacco Free Florida program and the Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County (DOH-Okaloosa) are launching a new initiative, *Secondhand Smoke Exposed*, as part of the eighth annual Tobacco Free Florida Week, taking place May 8-14, to educate Okaloosa County residents about the dangers of secondhand smoke.

This year’s theme, *Secondhand Smoke Exposed*, focuses on dispelling the common myth that secondhand smoke is harmless. The fact is that breathing even small amounts of secondhand smoke can be dangerous.¹ In observance of Tobacco Free Florida Week, Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) members from Crestview High School will be educating 5th graders from Bob Sikes Elementary about the dangers of secondhand smoke. DOH-Okaloosa staff will be attending a health fair for employees of the City of Fort Walton Beach and will educate attendees about the dangers of tobacco.

“Many people are unaware of how dangerous secondhand smoke exposure can be,” stated Carrie Ziegler, Assistant Director of DOH-Okaloosa. “DOH-Okaloosa and its dedicated community partners are committed to educating the public about the dangers secondhand smoke and encourage residents to join the fight against tobacco and help make Okaloosa County a healthier place to live, learn, work, and play.”

DOH-Okaloosa supports local tobacco-related interventions, including raising public awareness about subject areas related to secondhand smoke. From guiding a multiunit housing property through the process of going smoke-free, to presenting the benefits of a tobacco free college campus, representatives in Okaloosa County offer various services.*

To aid in reducing secondhand smoke exposure to pets, DOH-Okaloosa has recently started working with the Panhandle Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) in Okaloosa County to implement a 100 percent tobacco free policy for their grounds.

Despite the growing trend of smoke-free policies and the substantial decrease of smokers in the state, many of Okaloosa County’s most vulnerable are still involuntarily affected by secondhand smoke, which has hundreds of toxic chemicals including about 70 that are known to cause cancer.² Secondhand smoke greatly increases the risk of

lung cancer, which is Florida's number-one cancer killer.³ Each year, primarily due to secondhand smoke exposure, an estimated 7,300 non-smoking Americans die of lung cancer.⁴

May is also Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, and tobacco smoke is one of the most common asthma triggers.⁵ Children with asthma who are exposed to secondhand smoke are likely to experience more frequent and more severe attacks, which can put their lives in danger.⁶ In fact, more than 40 percent of children who go to the emergency room for asthma attacks live with smokers.⁷

Residents in Okaloosa County and throughout the state benefit from the Florida Clean Indoor Air Act (FCIAA), which was amended in 2003 to prohibit smoking in indoor workplaces. The Florida Department of Health has a dedicated phone line (1-800-337-3742) where you can report violations to the FCIAA. Floridians can help protect themselves and their families by reporting unlawful smoking, while making the state an even better place to live.

If you smoke, the best thing you can do to protect your loved ones is to quit. Floridians who want to quit smoking are encouraged to use Tobacco Free Florida's free and proven-effective services. More information is available at tobaccofreeflorida.com.

**Editor's Note: Tobacco Free Florida's and DOH-Okaloosa's assistance with local tobacco free policy efforts are not lobbying, but are services to build awareness and support of jurisdictional voluntary initiatives to improve the health of Floridians.*

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About Tobacco Free Florida Week

The eighth annual Tobacco Free Florida Week takes place from May 8-14. Join the conversation on social media using #SHSExposed.

About Tobacco Free Florida

The Florida Department of Health's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of the state's three ways to quit. Since 2007, more than 137,000 Floridians have successfully quit, using one of these free services. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida and the state's free quit resources, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or on Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.

The department 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](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.floridahealth.gov.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease: The Biology and Behavioral Basis for Smoking-Attributable Disease: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2010.

³ American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts & Figures 2012. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2012.

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Asthma: Common Asthma Triggers](#) [last updated 2012 Aug 20; accessed 2014 May 5]

⁶ Surgeon General: *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke, A Report of the Surgeon General*. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA; 2006.

⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. —The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006.