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Teen in Crestview Helps Lead Florida's Movement Against Tobacco

Students Working Against Tobacco Elect Kendra O'Malley to Its Leadership Board



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Crestview, Fla. — Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT), Florida's statewide youth-led movement to combat the tobacco industry, announced the names of its new Youth Advocacy Board members. Kendra O'Malley of Okaloosa County was named a Youth Advocacy Board (YAB) Leader. As a YAB Leader, Kendra will be on the board to represent the Region 1 SWAT clubs. Region 1 includes the 18 counties from Escambia to Madison and Taylor counties.

The Youth Advocacy Board works in collaboration with the Florida Department of Health's Bureau of Tobacco Free Florida to help plan SWAT organization's direction and goals, and provide input on the state's youth prevention efforts. Students work with county grantees to support initiatives that educate their peers about tobacco use, help protect youth from tobacco, and strengthen local policies, especially those that protect the public from secondhand smoke exposure.

SWAT aims to empower, educate and equip Florida youth to revolt against Big Tobacco. The group is a movement of inspired youth working together to de-glamorize tobacco use. Its efforts aim to shape tobacco free norms, and make tobacco less desirable, less acceptable and less accessible.

Other teens elected into the Youth Advocacy Board are, from Region 1: Lily Anderson, Washington County; Catalina Rios, Santa Rosa County; Ja'Toria Stephens, Bay County. Region 2: Amaya Figueroa, Baker County; Destiny Cole, Flagler County; Emma Ronchetti, Levy County; Laycee Hallman, Levy County. Region 3: Allyssa Williams, Osceola County; Nicole Jimenez, Seminole County; Sachit Gali, Sarasota County; Emma Buscemi, Hernando County. Region 4: Sebastian Suarez, St. Lucie County; Amanda Bouqeta, St. Lucie County; Maddie Chabab, St. Lucie County; Drew Latta, Miami-Dade County.

"I am most looking forward to working with the amazing people I have met and to be working on our new health message," said Kendra O'Malley.

Members of the SWAT Youth Advocacy Board will serve a term through June 30, 2018.

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.

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About Tobacco Free Florida

The department's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Since the program began in 2007, more than 159,000 Floridians have successfully quit using one of Tobacco Free Florida's free tools and services. There are now approximately 451,000 fewer adult smokers in Florida than there was 10 years ago, and the state has saved \$17.7 billion in health care costs. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way services, visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com or follow the campaign on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida or on Twitter at www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla.



Kendra O'Malley (pictured) of Crestview High School was chosen to represent Northwest Florida on the Youth Advisory Board for Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT).